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A4H launches 21st State Chapter in Florida

► Details on page 21

Amazon, Microsoft, Google bet big on India

► Details on page 15



Adah Sharma on her ideal partner she looks for

► Details on page 34

INDIA POST
SURVEY
survey@indiapost.com

This week's question

Will Trump completely withdraw support to Ukraine?

Last week's result

Is US nervous with the developing India - Russia - China equation?

YES 84% NO 16%

DEEPAWALI ON UNESCO LIST

'May the ideals of Prabhu Shri Ram keep guiding us for eternity': PM Modi on Deepawali in UNESCO list

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated that people in India and around the world are thrilled that Deepawali has been added to UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. He said that humanity should always be guided by the principles of Lord Ram.

PM Modi took to the social media platform X and wrote, "People in India and around the world are thrilled. For us,

Deepawali is very closely linked to our culture and ethos. It is the soul of our civilization. It personifies illumination and righteousness. The addition of Deepawali to the UNESCO Intangible Heritage List will contribute to the festival's global popularity even further."

"May the ideals of Prabhu Shri Ram keep guiding us for eternity," he added.

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Consulate General of India, San Francisco hosts Pre-Summit Conference on AI Innovation & Global Collaboration



VIDYA SETHURAMAN
India Post News Service

SAN FRANCISCO, CA: The Consulate General of India in San Francisco hosted a high-profile Pre-Summit Conference on Dec 3 on Artificial Intelligence, bringing together global technology leaders, policymakers, investors, and innovators to explore the future of responsible and inclusive AI. The event featured engaging dialogues on human-centric innovation, sustainable intelligence, and the role of emerging tech-

nologies in building equitable global ecosystems. The event was hosted by CGISF Dr Srikar Reddy in collaboration with EvolveSVF and Indiaspora.

The conference opened with a Welcome Address by Dr. K. Srikar Reddy, Consul General of India in San Francisco, followed by a Special Address from Ambassador Namgya Khampa, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of India, Washington D.C., setting the stage for a day of thought-provoking discussions.

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CGISF Honoring Ambassador Namgya Khampa

► Details on page 20



'India needs more skilled knee surgeons'

► Details on page 28

Foreign Secy holds talks with top US diplomat

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Mission Statement

To empower the Indian Diaspora and make their voice strong and effective in countries of their adoption. RJ Media conglomerate offers a credible, professional and complete package of news, opinion, entertainment, networking and information.

HIGHLIGHTS

Bollywood:

Adah Sharma's ideal partner



On Instagram, she revealed the kind of man she is drawn to and the qualities she considers essential in a partner

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Lifestyle:

National Handicrafts Awards



President Murmu presents National Handicrafts Awards, highlighting handicrafts not only part of cultural identity but also an important source of livelihood

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Cover Story:

DEEPAWALI ON UNESCO LIST



PM Modi stated the people in India and around the world are thrilled that Deepawali has been added to UNESCO's List

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Techbiz:

Google launches AI Plus plan



Google launched Google AI Plus in India, a subscription that expands access to its latest AI models, multimedia tools and other features

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Honoring Ambassador Namgya Khampa



The event brought together leaders of the Indian diaspora, community organizations, business executives, and cultural representatives from across Northern California

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Thekkady



Home to the country's largest Tiger Reserve- Periyar, Thekkady is an important tourist destination in Kerala & Periyar National Park, a major attraction

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Belgian citizen's Exit visa



An FIR was lodged against him in 2023 for allegedly participating in a hunger strike in Ladakh. His visa has already expired

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Indian govt is leveraging AI to drive transformative change in public health services, especially to tackle the burden of tuberculosis and diabetes

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आपने इस स्टेट को बनाने में मदद की है— अपना देश छोड़कर, अपनों को छोड़कर, और अपनों के बेहतरीन ज़िंदगी के लिए।

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आपको चाहिये थोड़ा सा प्यार, थोड़ा देखभाल --एक चैंपियन की, क्योंकि हर कैलिफ़ोर्निया-वासी को कारगर स्वास्थ्य सेवा मिलनी चाहिये।

आपको अपने या अपने बच्चों के स्वास्थ्य में चुनना न पड़े, या फिर अपनी ज़रूरी आवश्यकताओं को दबाना न पड़े, इसी लिए हम आपकी वकालत करते हैं। हम सौदा करते हैं ताकि आपको बेहतर स्वास्थ्य सेवा मिल सके।

हम स्वास्थ्य बीमा कंपनी नहीं हैं। हम इसमें आपके लिए हैं।



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MALABAR GOLD & DIAMONDS LAUNCHES 2 NEW SHOWROOMS IN THE USA & CANADA

EXPANDS NORTH AMERICAN PRESENCE TO 10 SHOWROOMS

Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 5th largest jewelry retailer globally with over 415 showrooms across 14 countries, has just launched two new showrooms in USA & Canada. The 3rd showroom of Malabar Gold & Diamonds in Canada was unveiled at Ajax, Ontario, and the 7th showroom of the brand in the USA was unveiled at Austin, Texas. Strengthening Malabar Gold & Diamonds' ever-expanding global presence, the new outlets bring the brand's retail presence in North America to an impressive 10 showrooms. The new showrooms in Canada & the USA are also the brand's 416th & 417th global showrooms, respectively.

The showroom at Austin, Texas, USA was officially inaugurated on 7th December by Ms. Na'Cole Thompson, Mayor for the City of Leander in the presence of Mr.

showrooms reflects our commitment to elevating India's jewelry craftsmanship onto the world stage and advancing our ambition to become the world's No.1 jewelry retailer. These launches also reaffirm our dedication to customers across continents who continue to place their trust in our brand. It is not merely about adding new retail spaces, but about building cultural bridges, creating new standards of transparency, and introducing the world to the unparalleled richness of Indian jewelry design. We remain focused on strengthening our global presence through responsible practices, innovation, and the unwavering values that have guided us for over three decades."

The newly unveiled showroom of Malabar Gold & Diamonds in Ajax will be the brand's flagship showroom in Canada. Spanning 6,000+ sq.ft. of shopping area, the showroom houses a massive collection of over 30,000

world-class products but also doing so with unwavering integrity. The launch of our Austin and Ajax showrooms is another step in delivering a retail experience that combines global luxury with ethical value. Our customers can trust that every piece they purchase is crafted with respect for people, the environment, and the global supply chain. We are also investing in strengthening our ESG initiatives across markets, ensuring that our expansion brings measurable positive impact. As we grow internationally, we remain committed to fostering local relationships, creating employment opportunities, and introducing customers to world-class jewelry backed by the highest standards of responsibility and craftsmanship."

Malabar Gold & Diamonds is steadily expanding its footprint in North America, with a total of 10 showrooms across the region. This includes 7 showrooms in key U.S. cities-Los Angeles, New Jersey, Dallas, Chicago, Naperville, Atlanta, and Austin-alongside 3 showrooms in Canada, located at Ontario, Vancouver and Ajax.

"North America has evolved into one of the most influential and high-potential markets in the global jewelry industry. The region is home to a vibrant Indian sub-continental diaspora that deeply values traditional craftsmanship, while also attracting a growing audience of mainstream customers who appreciate the contemporary elegance and design diversity that Malabar Gold & Diamonds brings. Our expansion into Austin & Ajax reflects our deep understanding & trust in the city's jewelry landscape and we are confident that these showrooms will go on to become a preferred jewelry shopping destination for residents. Our presence in North America remains vital to our global expansion plans and to this effect, we have charted an ambitious expansion plan for both the USA & Canada. In the USA, more showroom launches are being planned across San Francisco, Seattle, Tampa, Virginia, Detroit, Houston, Charlotte, Phoenix, New York, and San Diego. In Canada, expansion is being planned to Calgary, Vancouver & Montreal in the near future", commented Mr. Shamlal Ahamed, MD-International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds is renowned globally for offering an unparalleled jewelry buying experience with convenience and customer-friendly policies along with the 'Malabar Promise' of incomparable quality and service assurance. Apart from this, the Malabar Promise also includes transparent pricing, assured lifetime maintenance from any of the showrooms across 14 countries, guaranteed buyback, tested and certified diamonds, 100% value on diamond and gold jewelry exchange, 100% hallmarked jewelry, responsible sourcing, fair price policy, and fair labor practices.

ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) initiatives have been the primary commitment of Malabar Group since its inception in 1993, with 5% of net profits set aside towards such initiatives in each country of operations.



The 7th showroom of Malabar Gold & Diamonds in the USA and the 417th global showroom of the brand was officially inaugurated at Austin, Texas on 7th December by Ms. Na'Cole Thompson, Mayor for the City of Leander, in the presence of Mr. Shamlal Ahamed, MD-International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Mr. Faisal AK, Head of Manufacturing, Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Mr. Ameer CMC, Director of Finance & Admin at Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Mr. Shaji K, Chief Digital Officer at Malabar Group; Mr. Joseph Eapen, Regional Head of North America operations at Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Mr. Jasar R, Branch Head of Malabar Gold & Diamonds in the USA; Mr. Barani SM, Deputy branch head at Malabar Gold & Diamonds, other senior management team members, customers & well-wishers.

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The showroom at Ajax, Ontario, Canada, was officially inaugurated on 6th December by Ms. Nina Tangri, Associate Minister of Small Business of Ontario.

Chairman of Malabar Group, M.P. Ahammad, commented: "Our North American operations have always been a pivotal part of our international growth journey, and we are proud to expand our retail presence in the region with 2 new showrooms. The launch of our Austin & Ajax

jewelry designs in Gold & Diamond jewelry across over 25+ exclusive brands & collections from Malabar Gold & Diamonds. The design portfolio also presents an extensive array of bridal jewelry, alongside a wide range of options for occasional wear, daily wear & office wear. The showroom also has a customized jewelry designing facility, a luxurious customer lounge & ample parking.

The showroom at Austin, Texas has been designed to be one of the premium showrooms of Malabar Gold & Diamonds in the USA, with over 20,000+ jewelry designs in 18K, 22K Gold & Diamond jewelry, with provision for customized jewelry designing facility & a luxurious customer lounge.

Abdul Salam K.P., Vice Chairman of Malabar Group, said: "As we expand our footprint across North America, sustainability, responsibility, and ethical business practices remain central to our growth strategy. The jewelry industry is undergoing rapid transformation, and we believe that true leadership comes from not only offering

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DEEPAWALI ON UNESCO LIST

*'May the ideals of Prabhu Shri Ram keep guiding us for eternity':
PM Modi on Deepawali in UNESCO list*

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated that people in India and around the world are thrilled that Deepawali has been added to UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. He said that humanity should always be guided by the principles of Lord Ram.

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"May the ideals of Prabhu Shri Ram keep guiding us for eternity," he added.

Union Minister for Culture and Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat also took to social media X and said, "A historic day for India. Deepawali has been officially inscribed on the UNESCO List of Intangible



Cultural Heritage of Humanity. During the tenure of Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi Ji, India's cultural heritage is receiving unprecedented global recognition and this milestone strengthens that journey."

"This honor celebrates the universal

message of our festival of lights: hope over despair, harmony over division, and light for all. My gratitude to UNESCO and to every custodian of our timeless traditions. Jai Hind," he added.

UNESCO announced the development

on its official X handle, posting: "BREAKING. New inscription on the #IntangibleHeritage List: Deepawali, #India. Congratulations!"

A total of 67 nominations submitted by nearly 80 countries, including India's Deepawali festival, were assessed during the week-long key session of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which began at Delhi's Red Fort.

The 20th session of the Committee is being held at the iconic Mughal-era monument from December 8 to 13. This is also the first time India is hosting a session of the UNESCO panel.

India currently has 15 elements inscribed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list, including the Kumbh Mela, Kolkata's Durga Puja, Gujarat's Garba, Yoga, Vedic chanting, Ramlila, Ramman, and Kutiyattam. With Deepawali's inclusion, India's cultural prestige on the global stage gains a significant boost. IANS

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Consulate General of India, San Francisco hosts Pre-Summit Conference on AI Innovation & Global Collaboration

VIDYA SETHURAMAN
India Post News Service

SAN FRANCISCO, CA: The Consulate General of India in San Francisco hosted a high-profile Pre-Summit Conference on Dec 3 on Artificial Intelligence, bringing together global technology leaders, policymakers, investors, and innovators to explore the future of responsible and inclusive AI. The event featured engaging dialogues on human-centric innovation, sustainable intelligence, and the role of emerging technologies in building equitable global ecosystems. The event was hosted by CGISF Dr Srikar Reddy in collaboration with EvolveSVF and Indiaspora.

The conference opened with a Welcome Address by Dr. K. Srikar Reddy, Consul General of India in San Francisco, followed by a Special Address from Ambassador Namgya Khampa, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of India, Washington D.C., setting the stage for a day of thought-provoking discussions. "The question before us is no longer whether AI will transform our world, but how it will do so, and for whom. India approaches this moment with intentionality and purpose. We in India choose a future in which AI empowers people, protects our planet, and accelerates inclusive progress," Khampa said.



Dr Srikar Reddy, CGISF said the Bay Area conference drew more than 600 participants, including representatives from Nvidia, Microsoft, Google, Salesforce, venture capital firms, and startups. The purpose of organizing the pre-summit event in the U.S. is to ensure participation of the AI companies in the conference in India, Reddy said. Dr Reddy said the summit is anchored in the principles of "People, Planet, and Progress," stressing that India's goal is to ensure AI drives inclusive development. "We are bringing together governments and leading experts from 100 countries to shape actionable recommendations that ensure AI does not deepen global divides but delivers measurable, inclusive impact for all," he said.

India will host the AI Impact Summit 2026 from 16-20 February in New Delhi, marking the first time a major global AI summit will be held in the Global South. The India AI Summit's agenda is organized around seven thematic pillars, known as the 'seven Chakras': Human Capital, Inclusion, Safe & Trusted AI, Resilience, Innovation and Efficiency, Democratizing AI Resources, and AI for Economic Development and Social Good.

Cont'd on page 12



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Bharat Parv celebrates creative partnership between India-UK

LONDON: The Indian High Commission in UK hosted 'Bharat Parv', which celebrated the creative partnership between the two countries.

With the theme - 'Bharat Parv: Connecting Creators, Connecting Countries', the event took place on December 9 at the Courthouse Hotel.

The event saw cultural performances from various parts of India.

In a series of posts on X, the Indian High Commission about WAVES Bazaar and India Cine Hub at FOCUS 2025, which sparked conversations on the theme of future of screen storytelling.

"India at FOCUS 2025! WAVES Bazaar and the India Cine Hub lit up London with India's creative energy--sparking fresh conversations, connections, and collaborations for the future of screen storytelling."

"A full house at the WAVES India Reception at FOCUS 2025! The gathering brought together industry leaders for an afternoon of collaboration and celebration of India's rising influence in global storytelling."

"A vibrant #IndiaUK Collaboration Roundtable at #FOCUS2025, with insightful perspectives from industry experts. DHC Kartik Pande visited the India Pavilion and state pavilions exhibiting content on India as a global filming destination."

India-UK historical ties, over the years have transformed into a robust, multi-fac-

eted, mutually beneficial relationship.

Earlier in October while speaking at the UK National Day celebrations at the UK Embassy in New Delhi, EAM S Jaishankar had highlighted how 2025 was exceptional year for India-UK cooperation.



"Over the years, our ties have evolved from a complicated historic association to a dynamic and forward-looking partnership. This year has been an exceptional year for our modern relationship. We welcomed PM Kier Starmer in Mumbai, accompanied by the largest every trade del-

egation from the UK. PM Modi himself visited the UK 3 months ago, when the historic comprehensive economic and trade agreement was signed. During that visit, he also adopted Vision 2035, to guide our ties across 5 pillars - growth, technology

and innovation; defense and security; climate change and clean energy; education," said Jaishankar.

Jaishankar welcomed the approval of nine leading UK universities to establish campuses in India, marking a significant development in education cooperation. ANI

Foreign Secy holds talks with top US diplomat on defense, tech

NEW DELHI: Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri hosted Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Allison Hooker and held talks on strengthening US-India strategic partnership.

The talks covered aspects including defense and security among other aspects.

In a post on X, the US Embassy in India said, "Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri hosted Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Allison Hooker for consultations on strengthening the U.S.-India strategic partnership, including through defense, technology, and security cooperation that delivers concrete benefits for the American people."

Both sides focused on turning the vision outlined by President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi during their February meeting into tangible outcomes. Hooker is on a five-day visit to India to strengthen strategic and economic cooperation.

According to the US embassy, Hooker conveyed the administration's intent to advance collaboration in sectors such as defense, energy, technology, space and supply chain resilience. It said, "The meeting was an opportunity to translate President Trump and Prime Minister Modi's vision from their February meeting into concrete progress that enhances US security, jobs, and competitiveness, while supporting India's long-term goals."

The Ministry of External Affairs said the talks, held under the foreign office consultations mechanism, allowed a wide-ranging review of the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership.

The agenda included trade, investment, defense ties, civil nuclear cooperation, critical minerals, emerging technologies and trusted supply chains, as well as the ongoing TRUST initiative.

Both sides also exchanged views on regional and global developments, reaffirming their shared support for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

PM Modi's visit to Washington in February yielded a set of ambitious deliverables, with India committing to expand purchases of American oil, gas and military platforms, including F-35 fighter jets.

New Delhi and Washington also agreed to pursue a major trade agreement and set a target of USD 500 billion in annual bilateral trade by 2030. ANI

India backs Afghanistan's territorial integrity, condemns killing of civilians in border clashes with Pakistan

NEW DELHI: Strongly backing the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Afghanistan, India condemned the recent attacks on civilians during the ongoing clashes at the Pak-Afghan border.

When asked about the border clashes during a regular media briefing, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal responded, "We have seen reports of border clashes in which several Afghan civilians have been killed. We condemn such attacks on innocent Afghan people. India strongly supports the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Afghanistan."

Over the weekend, the Pakistani and Afghan forces, while accusing each other of igniting violence, engaged in a heavy exchange of fire along the border amid mounting tensions.

The latest confrontation on December 5 came after renewed efforts by Saudi

Arabia to broker a ceasefire between Kabul and Islamabad, which reportedly failed to yield results.

On December 6, Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid took to his social media platform, stating that Pakistan carried

out attacks in the Spin Boldak district of Kandahar, prompting the Islamic Emirate forces to respond," Mujahid posted on X.

Local officials in Spin Boldak said that Afghanistan gave a forceful response to Pakistani forces after an overnight assault,

"We have seen reports of border clashes in which several Afghan civilians have been killed. We condemn such attacks on innocent Afghan people. India strongly supports the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Afghanistan."

out attacks in the Spin Boldak district of Kandahar province in Afghanistan, triggering a response from the Afghan forces.

"Unfortunately, this evening the Pakistani side once again launched attacks towards Afghanistan in the Spin Boldak dis-

trict of Kandahar, prompting the Islamic Emirate forces to respond," Mujahid posted on X. Local officials in Spin Boldak said that Afghanistan gave a forceful response to Pakistani forces after an overnight assault, Afghanistan-based Tolo News reported. The officials accused Pakistani forces of targeting civilians, leading to five people being killed while five others being injured and causing significant financial damage to local residents. IANS

Former B'desh PM Sheikh Hasina thanks PM Modi for support during crisis

NEW DELHI: Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his support and praised the

and the longstanding ties between our countries. At a personal and diplomatic level, I am grateful for the refuge I have been afforded in a time of danger.



File photo of Sheikh Hasina and Narendra Modi

longstanding ties between India and Bangladesh.

She also thanked India for providing refuge to her during a time of danger, describing the country as a vital neighbor and partner.

Speaking exclusively to IANS on how she assesses Prime Minister Modi's role in Bangladesh's current situation, Hasina said, "India is a vital neighbor and partner. I value Prime Minister Modi's support

was recently sentenced to death in absentia by a special tribunal in Dhaka for "crimes against humanity" relating to her administration's harsh suppression of student-led protests.

When asked how PM Modi helped her in the time of crisis, she said, "I do not wish to talk about private conversations and relationships; however, I will say that I remain grateful to the people of India for their continued

support."

Amid Dhaka's call for the extradition of ousted Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, her son Sajeeb Wazed also said

he is "eternally grateful" to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for ensuring her safety and "saving my mother's life."

Speaking to IANS on Novem-

ber 20, Sajeeb Wazed reiterated his appreciation for India's support.

"I am eternally grateful to PM Modi. He has ensured my mother's safety and saved my mother's life. He is also keeping her under tight security. I am grateful to the Government of India and the people of India," he said. *IANS exclusive*

India welcomes steps taken by UK govt to sanction Khalistani terror entities

NEW DELHI: India welcomed actions taken by the United Kingdom (UK) government against anti-India, Khalistani extremist elements, hoping that both countries will continue to work closely in further strengthening the counter-terrorism and security cooperation.

While addressing a regular media briefing, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated that the steps taken by the UK government strengthen the global fight against terrorism and help to curb illicit financial flows and transnational crime networks.

When asked about UK government's action against Babbar Khalsa's Gurpreet Singh Rehal and Babbar Akali Lehar group, Jaiswal responded, "We welcome the steps that have been taken by the UK govern-

ment to sanction anti-India extremist entities, which strengthen the global fight against terrorism and extremism and help to curb illicit financial flows and transnational crime networks. Such individuals and entities pose a threat not just to India and the UK but to people across the world. We look forward to continuing to work very closely with the UK side in further strengthening our counter terrorism and security cooperation."

On December 4, the UK Treasury announced an asset freeze and Director disqualification against Gurpreet Singh Rehal (Rehal) who is suspected of belonging to organizations involved in terrorism in India. It also announced an asset freeze against a group, Babbar Akali Lehar, for promoting and supporting the same terrorist group. *IANS*

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"Not conducive to regional peace": US critiques China's use of radar on Japanese jets

WASHINGTON DC: The US has for the first time criticized the Chinese military's use of radar on Japanese fighter jets last week, as Tokyo refuted Beijing's claims it had given sufficient advance notice of military drills near Japan, The Japan Times reported.

"China's actions are not conducive to regional peace and stability," a State Department spokesperson told The Japan Times via email recently. "The US-Japan Alliance is stronger and more united than ever. Our commitment to our ally Japan is unwavering, and we are in close contact on this and other issues."

The criticism was the first comment by US President Donald Trump's administration following the Saturday's incident that

saw Chinese fighters dispatched from the Liaoning aircraft carrier twice illuminate Air Self-Defense Force jets with radar, maneuvers that Tokyo has lambasted as "dangerous," as per The Japan Times.

"China's actions are not conducive to regional peace and stability," a State Department spokesperson told The Japan Times via email recently. "The US-Japan Alliance is stronger and more united than ever"

The radar incident comes as Tokyo and Beijing remain embroiled in an increasingly acrimonious dispute following Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's Novem-

ber 7 remarks that the Self-Defense Forces could be deployed under certain "worst-case" scenarios, such as a Chinese naval blockade of Taiwan, which she said would constitute a "survival-threatening situation" for Japan.

Trump himself has yet to publicly weigh in on either the radar incident or Takaichi's comments, frustrating Japanese officials,

who have reportedly urged Him to offer Tokyo greater public support amid tensions with Beijing.

But with Trump eager to seal a trade deal with Chinese leader Xi Jinping during a planned state visit to Beijing in April, his administration has largely shied away from moves that could alienate China.

Japan's top government spokesman welcomed the State Department's comments, saying they "demonstrate the strength of the US-Japan alliance," as per The Japan Times.

But Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara also explicitly noted that "gaining other countries' understanding" in Japan's dispute with China remains "extremely important." ANI

Sindhi leader appeals to PM Modi over Pakistan's extremist-controlled nuclear arsenal

BERLIN: Shafi Burfat, Chairman of the Jeay Sindh Muttahida Mahaz (JSMM), urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to raise the issue of what he described as Pakistan's "extremist-controlled nuclear arsenal" at international forums and draw global attention to Islamabad's state-sponsored terrorism and radicalization.

In a detailed appeal Burfat said, "With deep respect and an unshakable commit-

ment to peace, dignity, and regional stability, I submit this comprehensive appeal on behalf of the people of Sindh, an ancient civilization, a distinct nation, and a people who today stand at the frontline of suffering under Pakistan's militarized, extremist-driven, and structurally artificial state system."

"This appeal is not merely a political statement. It is a warning. It is an alarm for

humanity. It is the voice of a nation struggling to survive under an oppressive, radicalized, and dangerously unstable state," he added.

Burfat argued that Pakistan's Sindh province faces a grave existential threat under the country's "extremist, militarized, and fundamentally corrupt state structure". With Pakistan's "radicalized, jihadist-influenced military elite" controlling

nuclear weapons through opaque and irresponsible command systems, he warned that the country represents not only a danger to Sindh but a destabilizing force for the wider region and the world.

Expressing concern, Burfat stated that the escalating nuclear danger under Pakistan's "radicalized" army is no longer about whether extremist groups might seize nuclear weapons. IANS

Pakistan's Lahore ranked world's most polluted city

ISLAMABAD: Lahore has been ranked at the top of global pollution charts with an Air Quality Index (AQI) of more than 300, according to the Swiss air quality monitor IQAir, which labeled it as an extremely unhygienic and polluted air prevails in various cities of Pakistan, local media reported.

Lahore, with an AQI of 353, was ranked in the first spot among the most polluted cities of the world. Quetta, with an AQI of 517, in the morning remained the most polluted city of Pakistan.

The air quality was measured as unhealthy in Rahim Yar Khan, Gujranwala and Faisalabad, while extremely foggy weather conditions were present in the plains of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and southern Punjab, causing poor visibility on highways, Pakistan-based ARY News reported.

Several sections of motorways were shut due to poor visibility. IANS

Consulate General of India, San Francisco hosts Pre-Summit Conference on AI Innovation & Global Collaboration

Cont'd from page 9

A powerful keynote address was delivered by Vinod Khosla, Founder of Khosla Ventures, highlighting the transformative potential of AI and the global responsibility shared by nations and industries in shaping its trajectory. "AI will be the most important technology humanity has ever created. Its potential to accelerate scientific discovery, improve healthcare, transform education, and expand human capability is limitless. What matters now is how quickly and responsibly we implement it." "Within the next 15 years, almost all expertise on the planet will be free, including medical, legal, scientific and educational services, and this is something people have a hard time accepting. By 2050, an abundant economy globally, not just in India or the U.S., is possible. Khosla also underscored that the biggest risk is not embrac-

ing AI fast enough, urging governments, industry, and academia to collaborate on responsible deployment without slowing innovation.

MR Rangaswami, Founder of Indiaspora, said the summit aims to engage the Indian diaspora in global AI discussions. "AI impact is a natural transition," Rangaswami said. "The government of India is geared up because it's looking for opportunities. This summit is meant to start those discussions and get the diaspora involved. Indiaspora is partnering this event to get the diaspora fully engaged in the U.S. and all the other countries so that we can be a force, and a bridge between India and the rest of the world."

Dr Romesh Japra, Chairman, FIA and Founder, A4H said by integrating AI into policymaking, governments can harness data-driven insights to craft smarter laws, anticipate societal challenges before they

arise, and deliver more efficient, equitable services. AI isn't just a tool, it can be the compass guiding public policy toward justice, sustainability, and greater social welfare.

Jovita Neliupšienė, Ambassador of the European Union to the United States, spoke on EU-India digital cooperation. "EU and India have very robust relations. We are negotiating a trade agreement. I believe that our cooperation, whether in AI or other digital areas, is extremely important because we are significant digital markets and we are democratic.

AI may be transforming every industry, but Vishal Sikka, former Infosys CEO, believes the next phase of progress must focus on trust. He said building "trustworthy and reliable" systems means creating AI models that recognize when they are uncertain and defer to humans in those moments.

President Droupadi Murmu, Union Ministers Giriraj Singh and Pabitra Margherita with other dignitaries in a group photo during the National Handicrafts Award ceremony for the years 2023 and 2024, in New Delhi. (Photo RB/ANI Photo)

हस्तशिल्प पुरस्कार समारोह HANDICRAFTS AWARDS CEREMONY (2023 & 2024)

मंगलवार, 9 दिसंबर 2025, विज्ञान भवन, नई दिल्ली
Tuesday, 9th December 2025, Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi



President Murmu presents NATIONAL HANDICRAFTS AWARDS FOR 2023, 2024

NEW DELHI: President Droupadi Murmu presented National Handicrafts Awards for the years 2023 and 2024 on 9 December, highlighting that handicrafts are not only a part of our cultural identity but are also an important source of livelihood.

Speaking on the occasion, the President said, "This sector employs over 3.2 million people. Most of the people who derive employment and income from handicrafts live in rural or remote areas. This sector promotes inclusive development by decentralizing employment and income."

She said art reflects our memories of the past, experiences of the present, and aspirations for the future.

Humans have been expressing their emotions through painting or sculpture since ancient times. Art connects people to culture. Art also connects people with each other, she said.

The President said that if our centuries-old handicraft tradition has remained vibrant and pre-

served, it is due to the commitment of our artisans, generation after generation. Our artisans have adapted their art and tradition to changing times, while keeping the original spirit alive. They have preserved the fragrance of the country's soil in each of their artistic creations.

The President said that handicrafts are not only a part of our cultural identity but also an important source of livelihood.

She said that promoting handicrafts is important for social empowerment, as this sector has traditionally provided support to people from weaker sections.

"Handicrafts not only provide a means of livelihood to artisans, but their art also gives them recognition and respect in society. She stated that the development of this sector will also strengthen women's empowerment, as women comprise 68 percent of the

workforce in this sector," she said.

President Murmu said that the handicraft industry's greatest strength is its reliance on natural and local resources. This industry is eco-friendly and has a low-carbon footprint.

"Today, the need for an eco-friendly and sustainable lifestyle is being emphasized worldwide. In such a context, this sector can make a significant contribution to sustainability," she said.

The President said that the Geographical Indication (GI) tag is strengthening the identity of the Indian handicraft products across the world.

She urged all stakeholders to

work towards obtaining a GI tag for their unique products. She said that the GI tag will give their products a unique identity and enhance their credibility at the national and international level.

The President said that the One District One Product (ODOP) initiative is also strengthening the international recognition of our regional handicraft products.

She said that on the strength of the knowledge, dedication and hard work of our artisans accumulated over generations, Indian handicraft products have established their identity across the world. IANS

3rd India-Nepal Cultural Festival held in Lumbini focusing on Buddhism

LUMBINI: Senior Indian official Munu Mahawar, Additional Secretary (North), Ministry of External Affairs, India, recently attended the 3rd India-Nepal Cultural festival in Lumbini, the birthplace of Gautam Buddha.

The third edition of the cultural festival organized by the Embassy of India in Nepal, in collaboration with the Lumbini Development Trust and Lumbini Buddhist University, focused on Buddhism.

"Our two countries share not only close civilizational and cultural ties but also a shared reverence for Lord Buddha and his teachings. Lord Buddha was born in the sacred city of Lumbini and he delivered his first sermon in Sarnath. ANI

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India's exports at all-time high despite global uncertainties

NEW DELHI: India's total exports of goods and services surged to a record high of \$418.91 billion during April-September 2025 of the current financial year to register a 5.86 percent annual increase as the strong momentum of the previous financial year, that ended on March 31, continued into the new fiscal year, according to a year-end review recently released by the Commerce Ministry.

"Remarkably, India's trade performance in the first half (H1) of FY 2025-26 is the highest ever export achievement in spite of persisting global uncertainties," the review states.



The robust performance follows the country's landmark achievement of total exports of merchandise and services scaling an all-time high of \$825.25 billion in 2024-25, reflecting a robust 6.05 percent growth over the previous financial year.

India's services sector continued to drive India's overall export momentum, achieving a record \$387.54 billion in 2024-25, a strong 13.63 percent growth. This upward trajectory remained firmly intact in the current fiscal year, with services exports rising to \$199.03 billion during April-September 2025, registering a 9.34 percent increase over the same period last year.

India's merchandise exports remained steady in 2024-25 at \$437.70 billion, while non-petroleum exports surged to a historic \$374.32 billion, recording a 6.07 percent growth. The positive trend continued in the current fiscal year, with merchandise exports rising to \$219.88 billion during April-September 2025, an increase of 2.90 percent over the same period last year, the review further states. *IANS*

Microsoft to bring over 15,000 employers and partners to India's NCS platform

NEW DELHI: Global software giant Microsoft will work with the Ministry of Labor and Employment to introduce AI-powered chatbots that will guide workers through key government employment platforms, it was announced.

A central feature of the partnership is Microsoft's commitment to encourage more than 15,000 employers and partners from its extensive international network onto the Ministry's National Career Service (NCS) platform. *IANS*

Google launches AI Plus plan in India with expanded access to Gemini 3 Pro

NEW DELHI: US tech giant Google launched Google AI Plus in India, a subscription plan that expands access to its latest AI models, multimedia tools and other features.

"From expanded access to Gemini 3 Pro in the Gemini app, to enhanced image and video generation tools like Nano Banana Pro and Flow, the plan unlocks advanced capabilities to boost creativity and productivity," the company said in a statement.

Further, the plan brings Gemini directly into users applications such as Gmail and Google Docs, along with more storage and family sharing benefits, it said.

The plan also offers expanded access to NotebookLM for deeper research and analysis.

Subscribers receive 200 GB

of storage across Photos, Drive and Gmail, and can share benefits with up to five other family members. The plan is positioned as an affordable way for users to

introductory offer of Rs 199 per month for the first six months for new subscribers.

"It opens up access to powerful AI tools to level up your pro-

ductivity and creativity - all at an accessible price," the statement said.

Google earlier in November outlined a broad safety-first road map for India that puts children, teenagers and older adults at the center of its Artificial Intelligence (AI) protection efforts.

It unveiled on-device real-time anti scam tools, text watermarking and digital literacy programs to make AI safer and more inclusive for users.

'Scam Detection', powered by Gemini Nano, will be rolled out on Pixel phones to analyze calls in real time and flag potential scams entirely on-device, without recording audio, transcripts or sharing data with Google. The 'Scam Detection' feature is off by default, applies only to calls from unknown numbers (not saved contacts), emits a beep to notify participants, and can be turned off by the user, it added. *IANS*



access advanced AI capabilities, Google said.

Google AI Plus is available at Rs 399 per month, with a special

ductivity and creativity - all at an accessible price," the statement said.

Google earlier in November

'Your Money, Your Right' movement to build financially empowered India: Piyush Goyal

NEW DELHI: Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal said that "Your Money, Your Right" movement is a "transforma-



Piyush Goyal

beneficiaries. "Your Money, Your Right" movement is a transformative initiative aimed at building a financially empowered and inclusive Bharat," he said in a post on social media platform X.

"Following PM Modi's call to strengthen this movement further, let us all come together to spread awareness, support beneficiaries, and help scale this movement across the nation," he added.

beneficiaries.

"Your Money, Your Right" movement is a transformative initiative aimed at building a financially empowered and inclusive Bharat," he said in a post on social media platform X.

"Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dynamic leadership, the government remains committed to ensuring that rightful owners receive what is duly theirs," the minister said.

Earlier in the day, PM Modi said

the 'Your Money, Your Right' initiative aims to ensure that every citizen can reclaim what is rightfully his or hers, as thousands of crores lie unclaimed in the Indian banks, insurance, and mutual

and pensions, has returned about Rs 2,000 crore to rightful owners in its first two months, the government told Parliament.

In a post shared on the social media platform LinkedIn, PM

"Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dynamic leadership, the government remains committed to ensuring that rightful owners receive what is duly theirs," the minister said

fund companies.

The nationwide campaign, launched on October 4 to help citizens recover unclaimed bank deposits, insurance proceeds, dividends, shares, mutual funds,

Modi said that "here is a chance to convert a forgotten financial asset into a new opportunity", adding that "together, let us build a transparent, financially empowered and inclusive India!" *IANS*

Amazon, Microsoft, Google bet big on India with huge \$67.5 billion total investments

NEW DELHI: India is rapidly emerging as one of the world's most attractive destinations for artificial intelligence (AI) investments, with three global technology giants Amazon, Microsoft and Google have announced \$67.5 billion commitments to build the country's digital future.

A young population, affordable data and a fast-growing digital ecosystem are helping transform India into a major hub for AI-led innovation, drawing unprecedented interest from companies like Amazon, Microsoft and Google.

US e-commerce leader Amazon has unveiled plans to invest more than \$35 billion in India by 2030, strengthening what it calls its three strategic pillars -- AI-driven digitization, export growth and job creation.

The company said its investments will expand AI capabilities, improve logistics infrastructure and support lakhs of small businesses across the country.

Microsoft has announced an equally ambitious move, committing \$17.5 billion over four years (2026-2029) to scale up cloud and AI infrastructure, expand skilling programs, and strengthen sovereign-ready digital capabilities

ties across India.

The announcement followed CEO Satya Nadella's meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who said India's youth will harness this opportunity to "innovate and leverage the power of AI for a better planet".

He also said that the country is on track to become the world's largest developer community by 2030.

Highlighting the country's growing talent and its emerging leadership in next-generation AI innovation, Nadella said, "India is projected to have 57.5 million developers by 2030, making it the largest developer base globally."

Google has also made a major commitment, announcing a \$15 billion investment to build a world-class AI hub in Visakhapatnam (Vizag).

In partnership with AdaniConneX and Airtel, Google will develop India's largest AI data center campus, powered by clean energy and supported by a subsea cable network.

Experts say the investment marks a shift in India's tech map beyond Bengaluru and Hyderabad, potentially giving the country a new global-scale innovation center on its east coast. *IANIS*



'Airline turmoil hits national economy': Delhi HC pulls up Centre over IndiGo crisis

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court pulled up the Union government over the widespread cancellations and delays of IndiGo flights, asking why the situation was allowed to precipitate into a nationwide turmoil that stranded lakhs of passengers and inflicted losses on the national economy.

A bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela, while hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) seeking an independent judicial probe into the episode, remarked that the crisis is not confined to causing inconvenience to passengers but also affects the economy of the country.

"We appreciate the steps taken by the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation and DGCA (Directorate General of Civil Aviation). However, what bothers us is how such a situation was allowed to precipitate, leaving lakhs of passengers unattended at airports. Such a situation is not confined to causing inconvenience to the passengers but also affects the economy of the country, as in the present day, fast movement of passengers is an important aspect to keep the economy functioning," the CJ Upadhyaya-led Bench observed in its order.

During the hearing, the Delhi High Court asked the Centre to explain the legal provisions available to act against errant airlines.

Referring to powers vested in the DGCA and the Centre under the Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam, the bench asked: "In case an airline fails to adhere to directions, what

is the provision available to you? Are you helpless? We want to know under which provision or policy decision you would take action against them?"

In response, Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma, who appeared for the Centre government, submitted that a high-level committee had been constituted and that the DGCA had issued a show-cause notice to IndiGo, which had "apologized profusely".

The law officer added that fare caps were imposed within two days of the crisis. *IANIS*

India on track to become world's largest developer community by 2030: Satya Nadella

NEW DELHI: Microsoft Chairman and CEO Satya Nadella said India is on track to become the world's largest developer community by 2030, highlighting the country's growing talent and its emerging leadership in next-generation AI innovation.

Speaking at an event here, Nadella explained how new tools and platforms are transforming the way people build software, create applications and design multi-agent AI systems.

"India is projected to have 57.5 million developers by

Apple expands retail presence in India with Noida store, 5th in country

NOIDA: In a boost to India's electronics manufacturing growth story, US tech giant Apple previewed Apple Noida, its first retail store here and fifth in the country so far.

The new store brings together Apple's full lineup of products and services. Customers can explore and shop the latest generation of iPhone, receive personalized support and expert guidance, and participate in 'Today at Apple' sessions, said the company.

"Connection is at the heart of everything we do in Apple retail, and we're excited to open the doors to a new store built for community and creativity with Apple

Noida," said Deirdre O'Brien, Apple's senior vice president of Retail and People.

"Our team members are thrilled to deepen our connections with customers across this vibrant city and help

them experience the best of Apple," O'Brien added.

At Apple Noida, located at DLF Mall of India, more than 80 team members are ready to help customers shop for the latest Apple products - including the latest iPhone series; Apple Watch Ultra 3 and Apple Watch Series 11 models; and the all-new iPad Pro and 14-inch MacBook Pro - both powered by the M5 chip.

Customers can take advantage of Apple's retail services, including personalized setup and support - making it quick and seamless to switch to iOS for the first time, as well as Apple Trade In and financing options.

Apple's retail journey in India began with the launch of its first two stores -- Mumbai's BKC and Delhi's Saket -- in April 2023.

In their first year, the two outlets reportedly generated nearly Rs 800 crore in combined revenue, making them among Apple's best-performing stores worldwide.

Interestingly, the smaller Saket store contributed almost 60 percent of total sales. *IANIS*



Satya Nadella

2030, making it the largest developer base globally," Nadella stated.

He described this as a powerful opportunity for India to contribute to "societal-scale" solutions using AI. "Developers in India are already using GitHub, Azure and Microsoft's new AI platforms to work on advanced projects that were once restricted to large research labs," Nadella added.

He outlined Microsoft's new "tool chain" for building AI applications, which includes

AppBuilder, Copilot Studio and Foundry. *IANIS*

India-Australia review education ties "from pre-school to PhD"

NEW DELHI: India and Australia recently held wide-ranging discussions on expanding cooperation in education, skills, and research, as Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan met his Australian counterparts, Jason Clare and Julian Hill, in New Delhi.

After the meeting, the Union Minister posted on X that it was "a great delight" to meet Clare and Hill. He said the talks covered the full spectrum of cooperation "from pre-school to PhD", with both sides focusing on fostering critical thinking among students and preparing them for an AI-driven future.

Pradhan said the two countries remained committed to adding "new dynamism" to the India-Australia education partnership through deeper collaboration between higher education institutions, joint research programs and smoother pathways for two-way student and academic mobility.

"Both of us remain committed to add new dynamism to the vibrant India-Australia educational partnership, including through collaborations between HEIs of both our countries, joint research funding in areas of strategic importance and smoother pathways for two-way mobility, among others," he wrote on X.

Look forward to our exchanges at the 3rd Australia-India Education and Skills Council Meeting for transforming India's educational landscape and shaping a bright future for both our countries," the Union Minister added, sharing pictures of their meeting.

On the sidelines of the meeting, Pradhan and Clare handed over a Letter of Intent to the University of New South Wales (UNSW), confirming that the top-ranked Australian university will set up a campus in India. UNSW is placed among the global top-20 in the QS World University Rankings, Pradhan wrote in another X post.

He also congratulated the university and welcomed it to India, calling the move an important step towards transforming India's education ecosystem. *ANI*

Immigration

POST

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December 12, 2025

Delhi HC directs government to consider Belgian citizen's application for Exit visa

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court has directed the Central Government to consider the application of a Belgian citizen and academician, Wim Evert K. Lauwaert, who is seeking an exit visa.

An FIR was lodged against him in 2023 for allegedly participating in a hunger strike in Ladakh. His visa has already expired.

Justice Sachin Datta directed the Central Government to consider the application for an Exit visa.

The court noted that, as per the status report filed by the respondents, he has already been granted bail.

The court further noted that



there is nothing against him except that he stood in a hunger strike in 2023. Though, as per the police, the investigation is not completed

Meanwhile, the court agreed that the petitioner shall join the investigation virtually and there will be an interaction between

him and the investigation officer. The court said, to finish the investigation within one week.

The court said that thereafter, the government shall take action to grant him an exit permit or to extend his visa.

While issuing the notice to the Central Government on Decem-

The court noted that, as per the status report filed by the respondents, he has already been granted bail

ber 1, the high court had directed the respondents to decide the petitioner's Exit Permit application of October 3 under intimation to the petitioner.

"Till the same is done, no coercive steps shall be taken against the petitioner," the high court had directed.

The petitioner, a Belgian citizen and an academician, filed a petition asserting that he has been stranded in India for over a period of two months post expiration of his E-visa, despite no fault of his own.

It was submitted that the petitioner has made every possible bonafide effort to secure an Exit Permit from FRRO, however, to no avail.

It was also submitted that the petitioner works in Bhutan on a valid work permit to conduct academic programs, develop and support outreach initiatives that promote international understanding between the citizens of Belgium and other nationalities.

It was further submitted that the petitioner travels to India frequently as a middle point between his travel to and from Belgium to Bhutan, as there are no direct flights from Bhutan to Europe. For the same purpose, he entered India on November 19 to use the Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi, for the purpose of his return journey to Belgium.

The counsel for the petitioner further submitted that the petitioner was prevented from undertaking the aforesaid travel and was not allowed to board the flight that was due to depart from Delhi, on the pretext that his visa was due to expire that very night. Due to this, the petitioner was stranded in India. *ANI*

"Arunachal Pradesh will remain an integral part of India," says MEA

NEW DELHI: The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) strongly asserted India's unequivocal stance on Arunachal Pradesh amid renewed attention to the issue.

In a press briefing, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated, "We have stated many times that Arunachal Pradesh is and will remain an integral part

sory for Indian travellers visiting or transiting through China. This came after an Indian national from Arunachal Pradesh was detained at Shanghai airport last month.

Jaiswal said India expects China to abide by established global aviation norms and raised concern over the treatment of Indian citizens at Chinese airports.

ances that Indian citizens transiting through Chinese airports will not be selectively targeted, arbitrarily detained or harassed and that regulations governing international air travel would be respected by the Chinese side. MEA would advise Indian nationals to exercise due discretion while travelling to or transiting through China," he said.

The advisory followed an incident involving Prema Wangjom Thongdok, an Indian passport holder based in the United Kingdom, who was stopped by immigration officials in Shanghai on November 21.

Authorities allegedly questioned the validity of her travel documents because her place of birth is Arunachal Pradesh, which they claimed was Chinese territory. *ANI*

"We have stated many times that Arunachal Pradesh is and will remain an integral part of India, and we do not want any interference in it."

of India, and we do not want any interference in it."

Linking the territorial issue to recent developments, the MEA also issued a cautionary advi-

"We fully share your concern following the recent incident at Shanghai airport that you have cited. We expect the Chinese authorities to provide assur-

Chinese Embassy in India to launch online visa application system on December 22

NEW DELHI: The Chinese Embassy in India is set to launch the online visa application system on December 22, Chinese Ambassador to India, Xu Feihong said.

Sharing the details in a post on X, he said that the applicants could fill out the form and upload application materials online by visiting https://visaforchina.cn/DEL3_EN/qianzhengyewu

"Notice Regarding Online Visa Processing Approval- China Online Visa Application System will be officially launched by the Chinese Embassy in India on December 22, 2025. Applicants could enjoy convenience of filling out the form and uploading application materials online by visiting https://visaforchina.cn/DEL3_EN/qianzhengyewu. Welcome to visit this website for more details.

Chinese Visa Application Service Center in New Delhi

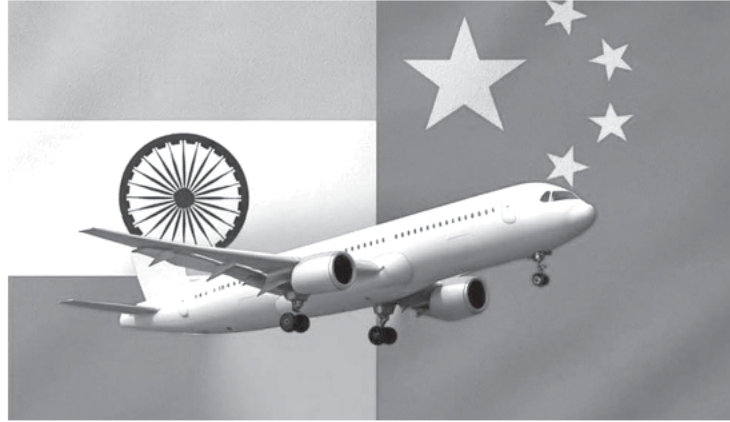
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Call: +91-9999036735

Address: Concourse floor, Shivaji Stadium Metro Station, Baba Kharak Singh Marg, Connaught Place, New Delhi 110001"

Earlier on November 26, the Ministry of External Affairs

confirmed that the visa regime for tourism and business purposes for Chinese nationals is now "fully functional," marking the end of a five-year suspension imposed after the 2020 border clashes.



MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, addressing the weekly media briefing, said, "Visas for tourists are being given to Chinese nationals and business visas were being given earlier. So you know, all those visas are now in place. The visa regime of tourism and business, etc, is fully functional."

India officially resumed issuing tourist visas to Chinese nationals worldwide in November 2025, expanding on a limited reopening that began in July 2025. Business visas were already being issued prior to this recent announcement, and that process remains in place.

The resumption of visas is part of a series of "people-centric" confidence-building measures agreed upon by both sides in 2025, which also included the resumption of direct commercial flights in October 2025 and the revival of the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra pilgrimage.

This decision is expected to boost tourism and trade and enhance people-to-people exchanges between the two most populous countries in the world. ANI

Expect China to assure that Indian travellers will not be selectively targeted, detained or harassed: MEA

NEW DELHI: India has said it expects the authorities in China to provide assurances that Indian citizens transiting through Chinese airports will not be selectively targeted, arbitrarily detained or harassed.

The strong statement came after an Indian national from Arunachal Pradesh was arbitrarily detained by Chinese authorities at the Shanghai International Airport last month, an incident which was termed by New Delhi as a clear violation of international norms and bilateral understanding.

"We expect the Chinese authorities to provide assurances that Indian citizens transiting through Chinese airports will not be selectively targeted, arbitrarily detained or harassed and that regulations governing international air travel would be respected by the Chinese side," Randhir Jaiswal, the spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) stated during a weekly media briefing in New Delhi recently.

"The MEA would advise Indian nationals to exercise due discretion while travelling to China or while transiting through the country," he added.

Prema Wangjom Thongdok, an Indian citizen hailing from Arunachal Pradesh, had alleged that she was detained for 18 hours by the Chinese immigration officials during what was supposed to be a brief three-hour layover while travelling from London to Japan on November 21.

She said that the officials refused to accept her Indian passport, claiming her birthplace, Arunachal Pradesh, was "part of China".

Following the shocking incident, India had strongly taken up the matter with the Chinese side.

"Chinese authorities have still not been able to explain their actions, which are in violation of several conventions governing international air travel. The actions by the Chinese authorities also violate their own regulations that allow visa free transit up to 24 hours for nationals of all countries," the MEA stated on November 25. IANS

US Senator flags H-1B abuse, raising questions for Indian tech talent

WASHINGTON: A senior US lawmaker urged the Trump Administration to intensify federal scrutiny of corporate use of H-1B visas, warning that major American technology firms are laying off domestic workers even as they continue recruiting thousands of foreign professionals - a trend with direct implications for Indian engineers who make up the single largest group of H-1B beneficiaries.

In a letter to Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer, US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Director Joseph Edlow, and Attorney General Pam Bondi, Senator Ruben Gallego said high-skilled immigration must

place US employees, especially as the American dream continues to grow further out of reach for young people."

Citing internal data and federal research, Gallego said, "large technology corporations have laid off hundreds of thousands of workers." At the same time, "in fiscal year 2025, these same companies were approved to hire over 30,000 foreign H-1B workers." He noted that unemployment among young American tech workers remains elevated, even as employers continue filing visa petitions for foreign recruits - a contradiction, he said, that deserves urgent review by labor, immigration, and enforcement agencies.

The senator pointed to a sharp decline in the representation of the youngest employees at major U.S. technology firms.

"Employees between the ages of 21 and 25 made up 15 percent of the

workforce in January 2023. By July 2025, that number had dropped to 6.7 percent." He said the figures show "there are young American workers eager to be trained for and to fill these roles."

Gallego added that the pressure facing Gen Z extended well beyond the workplace. According to the analysis he cited, "over 13 percent of unemployed Americans in July were new entrants into the workforce or jobseekers with no prior work experience, who tend to be Gen Z." IANS

"High-skilled immigration programs, when designed, implemented, and enforced appropriately, spur economic growth that creates good-paying jobs for American workers," Gallego wrote

advance economic growth without becoming a channel to "undercut or replace US employees." He argued that the pattern of mass layoffs followed by continued H-1B hiring has raised "important questions" about how large corporations are deploying the program.

"High-skilled immigration programs, when designed, implemented, and enforced appropriately, spur economic growth that creates good-paying jobs for American workers," Gallego wrote. "At the same time, we must ensure such programs are not used to undercut or re-

Bengaluru ranks 16th in global tech cities index

NEW DELHI: The city of Bengaluru in Karnataka has risen to 16th position in an assessment of leading global technology hubs, becoming the first Indian city to feature in the top 30 and signaling growing global interest in Asian markets, a recent report said.

"While San Francisco and New York retain their positions as the world's top two tech cities, Bengaluru's presence as India's premier technology center gains momentum amid rising global interest in Asian markets," said real estate advisory firm Savills India in the report.

Bengaluru, known as India's 'Silicon Valley,' continues to develop its deep talent pool and robust tech ecosystems, positioning itself as a key player to watch, it added.

"Cities that offer a rich mix of business opportunities, cultural life, and skilled workforces dominate as tech innovation centers. Bengaluru, with its broad talent base and evolving infrastructure, has the potential to strengthen its position in the global tech hierarchy as companies seek vibrant hubs beyond the traditional Western cities," said Arvind Nandan, Managing Director, Research & Consulting, Savills India.

Further, Asia Pacific's leading cities, such as Singapore and Seoul, have advanced in the index, propelled by strong infrastructure, business-friendly policies, and expanding tech sectors like AI, semiconductors, and biotech. IANS

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Real Estate POST

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India's rising incomes making homes more affordable: Report

NEW DELHI: India's fast-rising incomes have made buying a home far more affordable over the past decade and a half, with the country's price-to-income ratio dropping sharply from 88.5 in 2010 to 45.3 in 2025, as per new report. As average income levels have grown more than fourfold -- rising at around 10 percent annually -- housing prices have increased at a much slower pace of 5-7 percent a year, data compiled by Colliers India showed. IANS

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com

Smart City Mission: 7,741 projects worth Rs 1,55,386 crore completed, 323 projects ongoing



NEW DELHI: The Smart City Mission (SCM) has seen 7,741 projects (96 percent of total projects) amounting to Rs 1,55,386 crore being completed, and the remaining 323 projects amounting to Rs 9,425 crore are currently ongoing (as on December 1, 2025), the Parliament was informed.

The mission had undertaken 8,064 projects amounting to Rs 1,64,811 crore in 100 cities.

"Under the SCM, the Central government had a total outlay of Rs 48,000 crore for the 100 cities. As reported by states/UTs, as on 01.12.2025, the cities have been able to claim Central Financial Assistance of Rs 47,458 crore (99 percent of the total Central share allocation)," Union Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Tokhan Sahu told

the Rajya Sabha in a reply to a question.

The states/UTs are reported to have utilized Rs 46,093 crore (97 percent of the total Central share claimed), the minister added.

The SCM was aimed at developing 100 cities through an area-

project having defined timelines.

Under SCM, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Internet of Things (IoT), and data-driven systems like ICCCs, smart mobility, e-governance, smart water and waste management systems are being

used to improve service delivery which promotes urban renewal through better roads, housing, public spaces, sustainability initiatives and citizen-centric infrastructure, resulting in safer, effi-

cient and more livable cities. Meanwhile, post the financial closure of SCM on March 31, 2025, there is no budgetary outlay under the Mission, the minister said.

The ministry issued an advisory in June 2025 to all states/UTs, outlining the envisioned future role of SPVs and a roadmap for the continued functioning of Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs).

As per the advisory, all Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) are requested to ensure the timely completion of all ongoing SCM projects and prepare operation and maintenance plans for the assets created. Further, the advisory underscores the repurposing of SPVs to meet emerging urban challenges. IANS

Under the SCM, the Central government had a total outlay of Rs 48,000 crore for the 100 cities. As reported by states/UTs, as on 01.12.2025, the cities have been able to claim Central Financial Assistance of Rs 47,458 crore (99 percent of the total Central share allocation)

based approach - retrofitting, re-development, greenfield projects, pan-city smart solutions and covered sectors like mobility, WASH, governance, energy, and environment, with each

used to improve service delivery which promotes urban renewal through better roads, housing, public spaces, sustainability initiatives and citizen-centric infrastructure, resulting in safer, effi-

Rate cut to boost housing demand as home loans to get cheaper

MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank of India's decision to cut the repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.25 per cent is expected to give a strong push to housing demand, especially in the affordable and mid-income segments, as home loan EMIs are likely to come down in the coming weeks.

Announcing the monetary policy decision on Friday, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said the MPC voted unanimously for the rate cut to support growth in the economy.

He said the sharp fall in inflation to 1.7 per cent and the strong 8.2 per cent GDP growth in the

second quarter had created a "Goldilocks period" that gave the central bank room to ease rates.

Real estate developers and consultants welcomed the move, saying it would improve affordability and encourage fence-sitters to finally buy homes.

Anshuman Magazine, Chair-

man & CEO - India, South-East Asia, Middle East & Africa at CBRE, said the rate cut reflects the RBI's focus on boosting consumption in a low-inflation environment.

He said lower rates are likely to push banks to transmit earlier cuts more aggressively and support demand across real estate

segments.

"For real estate, this is expected to boost the demand and strengthen investment sentiment across segments. For home loan borrowers, this might bring a tangible relief as floating-rate EMIs will ease," he added. IANS

Indian households expect ease in inflation pressures to continue: RBI survey

NEW DELHI: Indian households are anticipating a notable softening in inflation expectations for the next three months and one year ahead, the Reserve Bank of India's latest Households' Inflation Expectations Survey showed.

The RBI released the results of November 2025 round of its bi-monthly inflation expectations survey of households on Friday evening. The survey was conducted during November 1-10, 2025, in 19 major cities, with 6,061 responses.

Households' perception of the current median inflation declined significantly by 80 basis points (bps) to 6.6 per cent in comparison to the previous round.

Households reported easing of price and inflationary pressures in most of the product groups including food products, non-food products, and cost of services for both the time horizons. The RBI survey found that fewer households now anticipate price increases across key segments such as food, non-food items, housing, household durables, and services.

For instance, the share of respondents expecting food prices to rise in the next three months fell to 74.9 per cent in November, down from 79 per cent in September, while those anticipating price increases in non-food products declined to 67.8 per cent, compared to 73.4 per cent in

anticipating price rises, compared to over 78 per cent earlier in the year. Housing and services categories, while still elevated, also reflected easing sentiments.

The survey also offered demographic insights, revealing a broad-based moderation in inflation expectations across age groups, employment categories, and gender.

The median current inflation perceptions ranged from 6.1 per cent among respondents aged up to 25 years to 7.4 per cent among those aged 35-45 years, but in every category, perceptions declined from previous rounds. Homemakers and retired persons, traditionally among the groups with higher inflation sensitivity, also reported easing perceptions.

Overall, the RBI survey underscored a broad moderation in inflation expectations. ANI

The RBI survey found that fewer households now anticipate price increases across key segments such as food, non-food items, housing, household durables, and services



Alongside, their inflation expectations for the next three months and one year ahead also experienced notable softening by 50 bps and 70 bps to 7.6 per cent and 8.0 per cent respectively, RBI said.

"For both short term and one year ahead periods, the shares of respondents anticipating rise in both general prices and inflation maintained its declining trend," the central bank survey found.

the preceding round.

Longer-term expectations show a similar pattern.

One-year-ahead expectations of price increases also dropped across categories, with general inflation expectations falling to 83.6 per cent in November, from 86.8 per cent in September.

Expectations for household durables exhibited the steepest decline, with only 68 per cent of respondents

Raipur-Vizag corridor poised to propel growth across 3 states

NEW DELHI: The upcoming 6-lane greenfield Raipur-Visakhapatnam Economic Corridor is poised to cut travel time between the two cities from 12 hours to 5 hours and boost economic development on the route between them as the project heads for completion in December 2026.

The corridor, being developed by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, stretches across the forests of Chhattisgarh, the mineral-rich landscapes of Odisha, and the hills of Andhra Pradesh. Being built at a total cost of Rs 16,482 crore, it is set to cut down the distance from 597 km with the existing NH-26 to 465 km, saving 132 km in distance and nearly seven hours of travel time, which will generate major fuel savings and reduced transportation costs for public and freight operators.



What once took 12 hours will soon just take 5 hours and will open the gates to faster logistics and seamless connectivity under the PM Gati Shakti vision. Industries in Chhattisgarh and Odisha, too, will get a major boost as they will directly be linked to the Visakhapatnam Port and the Chennai-Kolkata National Highway. This would mean

improved connectivity to ports and industrial hubs, quicker exports, smoother supply chains and a powerful push for trade, leading to a huge boost for logistics efficiency. The corridor will also promote tourism and stimulate economic growth through job creation and real estate development, according to a statement issued by the ministry.

For truckers who spend nights away from home, farmers who anxiously wait for their produce to reach markets, and families seeking avenues of new opportunities, this corridor feels like a path towards a more hopeful future.

Vishal, a lorry owner who regularly transports goods from Raipur to Visakhapatnam, says the new corridor will drastically change the way transporters operate. "Earlier, the journey took one and a half days. Now, I can start during the day and reach the destination by night," he says. The reduction in distance, he says, will directly translate into lower diesel consumption and less wear and tear on trucks, bringing tangible financial relief to operators like him. IANS

Mumbai's Worli accounts for 40 pc of ultra luxury residential transactions

NEW DELHI: Worli in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region has become the epicenter of India's wealth concentration, accounting for 40 percent of the country's ultra-high-net-worth residential transactions, commanding prices that rival global peers, a report said.

The growth is supported by an over Rs 69,000 crore infrastructure ecosystem, and fed by an incoming pipeline of projects worth over Rs 36,000 crore, the report from ANAROCK and 360 One Wealth said.

The area saw more than 30 homes priced above Rs 40 crore each sold in just 24 months, totaling over Rs 5,500 crore, with a transaction velocity that redefines India's residential real estate pecking order.

"Forty percent of India's entire ultra-luxury apartment market is now Worli. Across the entire country - from Bangalore's sprawling tech corridors to Delhi's power pockets - Worli accounts for nearly half of all transactions exceeding Rs 40 crore," ANAROCK Group Chairman Anuj Puri said.

"The momentum is only accelerating. The area witnessed one of India's costliest apartment transactions - 2 duplexes sold for over Rs 700 crore in 2025. Over the past three years, Worli closed over 20 residential deals individually priced above Rs 100 crore," he said.

Premium tower apartments in Worli now trade at Rs 65,000 to Rs 1 lakh plus per sq. ft., equivalent to New York's Lower Manhattan.

The price-to-size breakdown showed that apartments under 1,000 square feet cost below Rs 8 crore. Ultra-premium residences above 4,000 square feet cost over Rs 32 crore, the report said.

"Two decades of relentless development have transformed a largely nondescript industrial zone into a curated lifestyle ecosystem. There are nearly 4-5 million sq. ft. of premium residential and retail space currently under construction, just at the visible layer of a deeper structural shift," the report noted. IANS

**Indian-American
Sunny Reddy,
elected Michigan
GOP Co-Chair**

WASHINGTON: Indian American entrepreneur and community leader Sunny Reddy was unanimously elected Co-Chair of the Michigan Republican Party, marking a breakthrough moment for the Indian diaspora in one of America's most competitive political battlegrounds.

The vote-completed by unanimous consent-celebrates Reddy's rise as one of the most visible Indian American Republicans in the Midwest. Michigan Republican Party Chairman Jim Runestad, who introduced the nomination, said he had "felt long and hard about who the co-chair should be," praising Reddy for a rare combination of grassroots energy, donor outreach and, personal integrity.

"Somebody who's a hard worker, and I frankly don't know of a single more hardworking person than Sonny," Runestad said. "He's been in every part of the state of Michigan... He cares about every single part of the state of Michigan."

Runestad noted that Reddy's influence extends deeply into Michigan's Indian American community. "I couldn't believe that we had an event. There were 600 people, all their families, coming up to take a picture of him. So he's like the biggest celebrity in the entire Indian community," he said. Describing Reddy as "the nicest guy I have ever known," he added that he regularly hears of Reddy quietly paying for community needs without seeking attention.

The motion to close nominations and approve Reddy "by unanimous consent" was swiftly accepted, with the room responding in a unified "Aye." The chair declared the result unanimous.

Taking the stage moments later, Reddy spoke emotionally about the moment and what it meant for Indian Americans in Michigan. "Can you believe it? I am the first person to elect for any position as a Republican in Michigan, as an Indian-American, first person," he said to applause. *IANS*

COMMUNITY ACROSS AMERICA

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December 12, 2025



Consulate General of India, San Francisco hosts Community Reception Honoring Ambassador Namgya Khampa

VIDYA SETHURAMAN
India Post News Service

SAN FRANCISCO, CA: The Consulate General of India in San Francisco (CGISF) warmly hosted a special Community Reception in honor of Ambassador Namgya Khampa, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of India, Washington, D.C on Dec 4 at CGISF office. The event brought together leaders of the Indian diaspora, community organizations, business executives, and cultural representatives from across Northern California.

The reception celebrated Ambassador Khampa's continued efforts to strengthen India-U.S. relations and her deep engagement with the Indian-American community. In her address, Ambassador Khampa highlighted the growing partnership between the two nations across technology, education, innovation, clean energy, and people-to-people exchanges. She emphasized the indispensable role of the diaspora in elevating bilateral ties and contributing to India's global presence.



Consul General Dr. K. Srikanth Reddy welcomed the Ambassador and community members, expressing appreciation for the diaspora's sustained contributions to civic leadership, philanthropy, entrepreneurship, and cultural preservation in the United States. He noted that Ambassador Khampa's visit further reinforces the Consulate's commitment to collaboration, service, and community outreach. California is home to one of the largest Indo-American populations in the United States. With deep roots in technology, healthcare, small business, academia, and entrepreneurship, Indo-Americans have become a cornerstone of the state's innovation ecosystem.

The event underscored the strong connection between the Government of India and the vibrant Indian-American community in the western United States. CGISF reaffirmed its commitment to serving the diaspora and supporting initiatives that promote cultural exchange, innovation, and bilateral partnership.



Americans4Hindus launches its 21st State Chapter in Florida

A Major Milestone in the Rapid National Expansion of A4H

India Post News Service

Americans4Hindus (A4H), one of the fastest-growing political empowerment organizations for Hindu Americans, proudly announced the launch of its 21st State Chapter in Tampa, Florida on December 6th. The launch marks another historic step in A4H's coast-to-coast movement to strengthen civic participation, representation, and leadership among Hindu and pro-Hindu communities across the United States.

Dr. Romesh Japra, Founder and Chairman of Americans4Hindus, delivered an inspiring overview of the Mission and Vision of A4H-highlighting its rapid national expansion, its robust multi-PAC structure, and the urgent need for political engagement at all levels. He emphasized that Hindus in America, who have excelled in every field, must now claim their rightful place in civic and political leadership.

A4H Senior Advisor and founding Trustee Dr. Pawan Rattan introduced the newly appointed President of A4H Florida, Dr. Rakesh Sharma. In his inaugural address, Dr. Sharma pledged to unite all Hindus in Florida, build strong alliances, and empower the community politically. He also joined as a Trustee of A4H and introduced his dynamic Vice Presidents, Sanjeev Kumar and Rasesh Patel, who will lead statewide outreach and organizational development.

A distinguished guest at the event, Sarita Komatireddy, Candidate for Attorney General of New York, addressed the gathering and shared her deep passion for public service. Drawing on her extensive experience as a prosecutor, she spoke about her commitment to strengthening safety, security, and justice. Americans4Hindus unanimously endorsed her candidacy, recognizing her strong values and dedication.

The launch concluded with several attendees stepping forward to become Trustees, Champions, and Members of A4H-reflecting the growing enthusiasm to support Hindu American political empowerment on a national scale.

About Americans4Hindus (A4H) - Americans4Hindus is an independent, non-partisan national political organization with a Federal Super PAC, Hybrid PAC, Multi-Candidate PAC, and over 20 state PACs. A4H is dedicated to empowering Hindu Americans through political education, leadership development, strategic endorsements, and community mobilization.

For media inquiries: contact@americans4hindus.org





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MMNA Celebrates Diwali in San Francisco Bay Area

A Celebration of Devotion, Tradition & Community Magic



RITU MAHESHWARI
India Post News Service

This year's MMNA-WCN (Maheshwari Mahasabha of Northern America - West Coast North Chapter) Diwali celebration on Sunday, Nov 9 2025 was nothing short of historic. With the beautifully conceptualized Tulsi-Shaligram Wedding, the community came together in a grand festive union of music, dance, devotion, and shaadi-style masti - all wrapped in a Diwali glow. For many attendees, the evening felt like stepping straight into a traditional Marwari wedding back home in India... only bigger, warmer, and bursting with Bay Area talent attended by More than 315 people.

Pre-Event Festivities: Mehendi Across the Bay

The celebrations began a day earlier on 8th November, with Mehendi - PRE Wedding events. This was held in Fremont, South Bay, and Tri-Valley, and was attended by more than 70 participants.

Hosted by Puja Kasat & Shruti Bihani Soni (Fremont), Shailja Birla Maroo & Priyanka Inani (South Bay), and Priya Dhoot (Tri-Valley), these gatherings set the perfect- intimate, artistic, and filled with



laughter. Sakhis adorned one another with mehendi, symbolizing togetherness before the big day. With sumptuous food and wedding songs the Sakhis and kids enjoyed the feat to its fullest.

The Grand Vivah Evening: November 9th, 2025

A Marwari-style royal welcome -

ilaaychi malas, ladkiwale-ladkewale-maayredaar brooches, itta, almonds, and cheerful committee members greeting everyone personally to all the guests with all warmth

Exotic appetizers, elegant setups, and a keepsake photobooth elevated the experience from the very first moment.

The evening officially opening ceremony was with a serene Binayak (Ganesh) geet beautifully sung by four sakhis, grounding the celebration in tradition.

Guests arrived to a warm Marwari-style welcome - ilaaychi malas, ladkiwale-ladkewale-maayredaar brooches, itra, almonds, and cheerful committee members greeting everyone personally.

Exotic appetizers, elegant setups, and a keepsake photobooth elevated the experience from the very first moment.

The evening officially opened with a serene Ganpati geet beautifully sung by four sakhis, grounding the celebration in tradition. This was followed by all the other traditional wedding ceremonies which created more memories.

Nikaasi, Dhukav & Groom Entry -

A dazzling flash mob set the energy high as the Baraat began its journey down the aisle.

Shri Krishna/Shaligramji as the groom rode in with grandeur, accompanied by the Junior RAYS boys whose performance brought youthful excitement to the moment.

Baaraat Swagat

On the stage, three dynamic teams of the community - Tri-Valley, San Jose, and Fremont - welcomed the baaraat with electrifying group dances.

Bride Entry

Tulsiji as the bride was welcomed with grace and devotion. RAYS performers created a memorable aisle-to-stage entry, followed by bridesmaid dances by the Junior RAYS girls.

Sangeet, Saat Vachan & Negchaar

The Sangeet segment was a crowd favorite - creatively anchored in the style of "Sunoji Dulhan" from Hum Saath Saath Hain.

Cont'd on page 26



Americans4Hindus proudly endorses Janak Joshi for U.S. Senate

A historic moment for Hindu and Indian American representation

India Post News Service

WASHINGTON, D.C.: Americans4 Hindus (A4H), a national independent political organization dedicated to empowering Hindu and Pro-Hindu Americans, is proud to formally endorse Janak Joshi for United States Senator from Colorado.

Dr. Janak Joshi, a three-term Colorado State Representative, distinguished public servant, physician, and long-time community advocate, has emerged as a strong Republican candidate with an inspiring record of service, integrity, and commitment to American values. If elected, he would become the first Hindu and Indian American to serve in the United States Senate, marking a monumental milestone for representation and diversity in America's political landscape.

A Leader Who Stands for Community, Character & Constitutional Values

Janak Joshi has spent decades serving the people of Colorado with compassion, professionalism, and unwavering dedica-

tion. His record reflects:

- Three successful terms in the Colorado House of Representatives
- Strong commitment to fiscal discipline, public safety, and quality healthcare
- Deep alignment with Hindu values such as seva, unity, responsibility, and respect for all

Dr. Janak Joshi, a three-term Colorado State Representative, distinguished public servant, physician, and long-time community advocate, has emerged as a strong Republican candidate with an inspiring record of service

- A lifetime of service as a physician and humanitarian

His nomination represents not only political leadership, but also cultural pride and the rise of Hindu American voices in mainstream governance.

A4H Leaders, Trustees & State Presidents United Behind His Candidacy

At the Americans4Hindus National

Summit & Retreat held in Washington, D.C. in November, Dr. Janak Joshi personally met with:

- All A4H Trustees
- Presidents of 20 State Chapters
- Prominent Hindu and Indian American leaders from across the United States

During these discussions, Dr. Joshi articulated his vision for America, his commitment to conservative values, and his dedication to uplifting minority communities-including Hindu Americans who now seek a stronger voice in the nation's capital.

After thoughtful deliberation and unanimous support, A4H proudly extends its full endorsement.

A4H Statement

"Dr. Janak Joshi is a man of integrity, wisdom, and service-someone who truly represents the aspirations of Hindu Americans and the broader immigrant community. His election to the U.S. Senate would make history and strengthen our community's voice in Washington. We are honored to stand with him." - Dr. Romesh Japra, Founder & Chairman, Americans4Hindus

Call to Action

Americans4Hindus urges all Hindu Americans, Indian Americans, and supporters of representation and civic empowerment to mobilize, volunteer, and contribute to help elect Dr. Janak Joshi as the next U.S. Senator from Colorado.

This is not just a campaign-

It is a defining moment in our community's journey toward national leadership.

For media inquiries: info@americans4hindus.org or visit www.Americans4Hindus.org

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American Delegate/Actress Jo Sharma shines at IFFI Goa alongside hero Balakrishna, Rajinikanth, Shekar Kapur and Goa CM Pramod Sawant

India Post News Service

GOA: The International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa received a significant boost of international star power as Indian-American actress and American Delegate, Jo Sharma, graced the prestigious film event. Sharma, the heroine of the highly anticipated film M4M - Motive for Murder, marked a distinguished presence at the festival, participating in key events alongside some of Indian cinema's biggest icons and high-ranking government officials.

Spotlight on the Waves Inauguration

Jo Sharma made a notable entry at the Waves inauguration event, arriving alongside Tollywood superstar Nandamuri Balakrishna garu. Her presence added an international dimension to the platform, which saw attendance from Union Information & Broadcasting (I&B) Secretary Sanjay Jaju, Bollywood Director Shekhar Kapur, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, cinema legend Super Star Rajinikanth, and veteran actor Anupam Kher.

The inauguration and subsequent events were hosted by eminent personalities, including Secretary Jaju, Murugan, Anupam Kher, and Shekhar Kapur, who extended a warm welcome to the global delegates and film professionals.

Cinematic Collaborations and High-Profile Screenings

The American actress was also seen at a special screening of the film Laal Salaam. She watched the movie seated next to Super Star Rajinikanth and Bollywood Director Shekhar Kapur, interacting closely with the movie's team.

Further strengthening cultural and cinematic ties between India and the USA, Sharma actively participated in the IFFI parade. During the parade, she was pictured engaging with Goa Chief Minister Shri Pramod Sawant ji and Goa Tourism Minister Shri Rohan Khaunte ji, as well as members of the Tollywood Film Fraternity.

A Global Buzz for M4M

God of Masses Balakrishna, Sanjay Jaju I&B Secretary



Jo Sharma American Delegate/M4M Movie Heroine



International Film Festival of India IFFI GOA 2025

Film Fraternity Leaders

Prasanna Kumar, Mohan Vadlapatla, Ravi Kottarkara, Veera Shankar, Madhala Ravi, Kolli Ramakrishna & more

Star Hero Balakrishna, Super Star Rajinikanth, Director Shekhar Kapur, Goa CM Pramod Sawant



Jo Sharma American Delegate/M4M Movie Heroine



International Film Festival of India IFFI Goa 2025

Sanjay Jaju I&B Secretary, Actor Anupam Kher

Jo Sharma's visit comes as her upcoming film, M4M - Motive for Murder, directed by Mohan Vadlapatla, continues to create a global buzz. The film has garnered significant acclaim, securing an impressive 28 international film festival awards. Jo Sharma's powerful performance in the lead role has also earned her 7 Best Actress Awards. The much-awaited crime thriller is set for a theatrical release soon.

Industry Dialogue at FICCI

Demonstrating her commitment to cinematic dialogue, Sharma also contributed to meaningful industry conversations by taking part in an insightful FICCI session hosted by Ashish ji at the Waves Film Bazaar. The session focused on global cinema, production trends, and creative exchange.

With her dynamic participation across multiple key events, Jo Sharma successfully represented Indian-American talent on an international film stage, inspiring filmmakers and global audiences alike.

VTA board elects Sergio Lopez to historic second consecutive term as board chair

SAN JOSE, CA: The Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) Board of Directors has elected Campbell Mayor Sergio Lopez to serve a second consecutive term as VTA Board Chair. It is the first time for a board chair to serve consecutive terms, since VTA made the allowance in 2021.

Lopez's re-election reflects the Board's confidence in his collaborative leadership and commitment to strengthening transit throughout Santa Clara County.

During his second term, Lopez will advance key priorities from his first year as Chair, including strengthening



governance and accountability, improving Board orientation and operational transparency, and supporting progress on major capital projects such as the BART Silicon Valley Phase II Extension. He will also continue efforts to enhance workplace culture and ensure VTA is prepared to serve riders during major regional events in the coming years.

The Board also voted for San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan to continue serving as Vice Chair for the coming year, maintaining continuity in leadership as VTA advances key projects and priorities.

The new leadership terms begin immediately and will run through December 2025.

About VTA

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) is an independent special district that is responsible for bus, light rail and paratransit operations, transportation planning, and serves as the county's congestion management agency.

Amid national health cutbacks, California preserves full maternal coverage

VIDYA SETHURAMAN
India Post News Service

While federal health programs face cutbacks, California is expanding maternal health protections under MediCal. The state now offers one of the most comprehensive maternal health benefit packages in the country. Pregnant Californians, regardless of immigration status, are eligible for full-scope MediCal during pregnancy and for 12 months postpartum, ensuring continuous care during one of the most critical times in their lives. Yet many families remain unaware that this comprehensive support is available to them, including the many new services and benefits available through the California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) program. At AcoM briefing held on December 4, officials and medical experts from the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) provided detailed information on

relevant policies.

Erica Holmes said California has continuously strengthened maternal and child health care over the past few years, adding numerous benefits to improve healthcare accessibility, reduce racial disparities, and ensure safe healthcare for

Erica Holmes said California has continuously strengthened maternal and child health care over the past few years, adding numerous benefits to improve healthcare accessibility, reduce racial disparities, and ensure safe healthcare for people of all languages and cultures

people of all languages and cultures. She emphasized, "Regardless of immigrant status, cultural background, or language ability, California is committed to ensuring that all pregnant women receive comprehensive care during this most impor-

tant stage of their lives." Coverage includes prenatal checkups, nutritional counseling, delivery services, postpartum health checkups, and breastfeeding guidance. For one year postpartum, pregnant women can continue to receive medical services and mental health sup-

port. Officials point out that this extended postpartum coverage policy effectively reduces maternal mortality and helps in the early detection of postpartum depression and changes in physical and mental well-being.

Family PACT program provides contraception, reproductive health testing, sexually transmitted infection testing, cervical cancer screening, and fertility education, and is open to all eligible California residents regardless of immigration status. Family PACT fills the gaps in insurance coverage for many families and is very important for those trying to conceive, those not yet planning to conceive, or those unsure about their family planning.

California has expanded the scope of midwife involvement in childbirth care, allowing licensed nurse midwives and licensed midwives to practice independently, assisting low-risk pregnant women with natural childbirth and providing personalized care. Experts said the midwife model offers more flexible, family-oriented options, allowing pregnant women to avoid relying entirely on traditional hospital delivery.

Santa Clara Valley Medical Center named among U.S. News & World Report's 2026 Best Hospitals for Maternity Care

Awarded High Performing hospital for Maternity Care for the fifth consecutive year

SANTA CLARA COUNTY, Calif.: Santa Clara Valley Medical Center (SCVMC) has been named as a 2026 High Performing Hospital for Maternity Care by U.S. News & World Report (USNWR), the global authority in hospital rankings and consumer advice. This is the highest award a hospital can earn as part of USNWR's Best Hospitals for Maternity Care annual study and is the fifth consecutive year SCVMC has received the honor. SCVMC is part of Santa Clara Valley Healthcare, the public hospital system for the County of Santa Clara and California's second-largest public system.

"The maternity care at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center is second to none, so it is no surprise that it has once again been recognized as "High Performing" by U.S. News and World Report," said County Supervisor Betty Duong. "I was born there, my sisters were born there, and I insisted on having my daughter there."

USNWR rates hospitals that provide labor and deliveries services and submit detailed data to the publication for analysis. For the 2026 edition, approximately 900 hospitals nationwide submitted maternity data for evaluation. Best Hospitals for Maternity Care ratings are intended to assist expectant parents, in consultation with

their prenatal care providers, in making informed decisions about where to receive maternity services that best meet their family's needs.

For five consecutive years, SCVMC has earned a High Performing designation in recognition of maternity care, as measured by factors such as C-section rates in lower-risk pregnancies, severe unexpected newborn complication rates, exclusive breast milk feeding rates, and birthing-friendly practices, among other measures.

"We're committed to providing a comprehensive, accessible, and inclusive care for birthing families," said Paul E. Lorenz, Chief Executive Officer for Santa Clara Valley Healthcare. "This recognition is due to our wonderful doctors, nurses, lactation specialists, and all members of the staff who care for our families and new babies. Santa Clara Valley Medical Center cherishes the role we have in caring for families at this special time."

As a Baby-Friendly designated hospital, SCVMC has participated in quality improvement collaboratives and implemented patient safety practices in order to improve maternal outcomes. The Family Baby Unit and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit have also been recognized with a

PRC 5-Star Award for Excellence for improving patient experiences, healthcare employee engagement, and/or physician alignment and engagement based on surveys.

"Our care teams are dedicated to delivering the highest level of care with compassion and helping families create magical moments when welcoming a child," said Dr. James Byrne, Chair of the SCVMC Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology. "Five years of being recognized

as high performing is a testament to the care we provide and our highly coordinated system of maternal-newborn care resources in our clinics and hospitals."

SCVMC is part of Santa Clara Valley Healthcare, California's second-largest public health and hospital system that operates four hospitals and a network of primary and specialty care clinics for the County of Santa Clara.

For detailed story visit
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MMNA Celebrates Diwali in San Francisco Bay Area

A Celebration of Devotion, Tradition & Community Magic

Cont'd from page 22

Customized lyrics written by our community experts, recorded by our very own community singers and presented by our very own vibrant couples brought a magical, personalized touch.

Highlights Included:

- A vibrant Ganpati dance by committee members
 - Three amazing group performances including all age groups from 4 - 50
 - A heart-melting Father-Kid performance by five adorable pairs
 - A hilarious and grand Saat Vachan dance drama featuring Basanti selling "vachans" to dulha-dulhan pairs
 - National representatives introduced through a special Qawwali-style act
- Fun filled game of Twisted Nekchaars hosted by our Sakhi Leads.

Maayraa & Chhappan Bhog

One of the most cherished moments of the evening was the grand Maayra

Shruti Bihani Soni (Cultural Head)
Pankaj Chechani (Youth Co-ordinator)
Priyanka Inani (Joint Secretary)
Pratik Kabra (Public Relations)
Volunteers & Creative Leads
From Ayogan & Sajawat to Swagat, Maayra, Chhappan Bhog, Negchaar, AV, Sangeet recording, Annapurna, and more - hundreds of volunteer hours brought this vision to life and, this was not possible without fleet of volunteers from across Bay area.

This event proved once again:
Behind every event there are volunteers.

Behind every successful event there are MMNA volunteers.

The over-flowing feedback from the community to these volunteers with appreciation, gratitude and recognition made all the difference.

We would like to thanks our sponsors without them this was not possible.

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photobooths - set the perfect stage for Tulsi-Shaligram Vivah.

www.spundhann.com

Hashtag Photography by Rucha Joshi -

For capturing every sparkle, smile, dance move, and blessing so beautifully.

www.instagram.com/rucha_joshi_photography/

Bollywood for Life by Sneha Airani -

For powering the Baraat with infectious energy and creating a one-of-a-kind procession moment!

www.bollywoodforlife.com

A heartfelt thank you, to each sponsor, for enriching this Diwali with beauty, creativity, and joy.

Thanks to the wonderful Caterer Aditya and team with exotic, sumptuous , mouthwatering delicacies for all genres -

https://www.instagram.com/cuisineart_by_nency/

Looking forward for more such cultural events, so stay tuned.



celebration.

A Chhappan Bhog-56 delicacies-was presented to Tulsiiji and Krishnaji, carried in a beautiful dancing procession by bhai-bhai and devrani-jethani pairs. With all the gifts, badhai and this soulful act drew emotional applause and deep nostalgia from the audience.

The evening concluded with a lavish dinner followed by a high-energy DJ that had everyone - kids, youth, and adults - dancing to classic favorites. The perfect end to a perfect shaadi-meets-Diwali night.

A Salute to the Team Behind the Magic

A production of this scale - with 90+ performers and meticulous timing - is only possible through extraordinary teamwork.

MMNA WCN Committee-

- Sachin Dhoot (President)
- Shailja Birla Maroo (Vice President)
- Puja Kasat (General Secretary)
- Akshay Soni (Treasurer)

Philosophy

OSHO

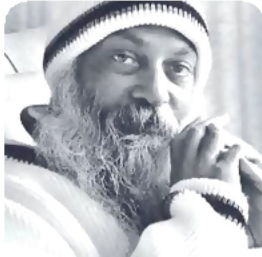
What is meditation? Gautam Buddha, the founder of Zen, the founder of all great meditative techniques in the world, defines it in one word. Somebody asked him one day, "Bhagwan, what is meditation? What is it all about?" And Gautam Buddha said a single word, he said: Halt! That was his definition of meditation. He says, "If it halts, it is meditation." The full sentence is: "The mad mind does not halt. If it halts, it is meditation."

Meditation is a state of thoughtless awareness: Meditation is a state of non-emotional, non-sentimental, non-thinking awareness. When you are simply aware, when you become a pillar of awareness. When you are simply awakened, alert, attentive. When you are just a pure awareness.

How to enter into it? The Zen people have a special word for the entry, they call it hua t'ou. This Chinese word means

brought from somewhere else. The meditation is there, the seed is there. You have just to recognize it, nurture it, take care of it, and it starts growing.

The interval between two thoughts is hua t'ou. And that is the door to enter into meditation. Hua t'ou - the word literally means "word head". "Word" is a



Osho

spoken word, and "head" is that which precedes the word. Hua t'ou is the moment before a thought arises. As soon as a thought arises it becomes a hua wei - hua wei literally means "word tail". And then when the thought has gone or the word has gone

and there is a gap again, it is again hua t'ou. Meditation is looking into this hua t'ou.

"One should not be afraid of rising thoughts," says Buddha, "but only of the delay in being aware of them." This is a tremendously new approach toward the mind, never attempted before Buddha. Buddha says one should not be afraid of rising thoughts. One should only be

When the mad mind halts, it is meditation

One should not be afraid of rising thoughts, says Buddha

ante-thought, or ante-word. The mind, before it is stirred by a thought, is called hua t'ou. Between two thoughts there is a gap, that gap is called hua t'ou.

Watch. One thought passes on the screen of your mind - on the radar screen of your mind one thought passes like a cloud. First it is vague - it is coming, it is coming - then it is there suddenly on the screen. Then it is moving, then it has gone out of the screen, again it becomes vague and disappears . . . another thought comes. Between these two thoughts there is a gap - for a single moment or a split second the screen is without any thought.

That state of pure no-thought is called hua t'ou - ante-words, ante-thought, before the mind is stirred. Because we are not alert inside, that's why we go on missing it - otherwise meditation is happening each moment. You have just to see it happening, you have just to become aware what treasure you are carrying always within you.

It is not that meditation has to be

afraid of one thing - of not being aware of them, of being delayed in awareness.

When a thought arises, if with the thought your awareness is also there - if you can see it arising, if you can see it coming, if you can see it there, if you can see it going - then there is no problem at all. This very seeing, by and by, becomes your citadel. This very awareness brings you many fruits.

Excerpted from 'Zen: The Path of Paradox, V.2.' The 94th birth anniversary of Osho is observed on December 11

50 SPIRITUAL APPETIZERS

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Rohingya Refugee Crisis: A Burden Bangladesh Must Bear

MD. AL-AMIN

The term "Rohingya refugee" now seems destined for the dictionary.

Their suffering continues unabated, deepening hostility, despair, and geopolitical opportunism among some neighboring states. More than one million Rohingya refugees remain an acute burden for Bangladesh-struggling not only to return home, but also to avoid becoming a long-term destabilizing factor within Bangladesh itself.

As global attention shifts elsewhere and Bangladesh's internal political landscape evolves, the Rohingya question risks being pushed to the margins. UN Secretary-General António Guterres once described the Rohingya as "the world's most widely dispersed minority." Yet their confinement in Bangladesh increasingly contradicts that label.

History Of Repeated Expulsions

The brutality of the Rohingya crisis has deep historical roots. Their exclusion began in earnest after Burma's (now

Myanmar) agreement in November 2017. Myanmar was supposed to verify Rohingya identities, build reception facilities, and begin phased returns, while Bangladesh compiled verified lists and provided logistical support. Attempts were revisited in 2019 and 2023 but stalled due to security concerns, lack of guarantees, and Myanmar's failure to create safe conditions.

Diplomacy Falters, Aid Dwindles

Following the political upheaval in Bangladesh, the interim government revived efforts to resolve the crisis. Bangladesh appointed Khalilur Rahman as its UN High Representative on Rohingya issues. Under the direct supervision of Professor Muhammad Yunus, UN Secretary-General António Guterres visited during Ramadan, where "Iftar diplomacy" was used to apply pressure. ASEAN-backed back-channel negotiations reportedly yielded an agreement for 180,000 returns, but no progress has materialized.

As global attention shifts elsewhere and Bangladesh's internal political landscape evolves, the Rohingya question risks being pushed to the margins. UN Secretary-General António Guterres once described the Rohingya as "the world's most widely dispersed minority"

Meanwhile, Bangladesh struggles to sustain 33 camps in Cox's Bazar - the world's largest refugee settlement-amid a 63% humanitarian funding deficit. Ration cuts

have intensified. Following USAID reductions, 48 health facilities were closed or scaled back, according to the International Rescue Committee. Nearly 300 children are diagnosed with malnutrition daily.

Last year, an appeal sought USD 85 million in additional funding for new arrivals but fell short. The 2025 Joint Response Plan-launched by the UN and Bangladesh government-requested USD 935 million for 1.48 million refugees and host communities. Yet implementation remains stalled.

Amid this bleak outlook, many Rohingyas attempt to blend into local communities, generating social tensions and security concerns. (The author is a foreign policy and security analyst and, educator who holds a postgraduate degree from the Department of International Relations, Rajshahi University, Bangladesh) South Asia Monitor

A repatriation process was meant to start in January 2018 following a bilateral

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com

Disclaimer: Views expressed are personal to the author

Op Sagar Bandhu: Over 2000 patients receive treatment in India's field hospital

COLOMBO: Amid India's relentless relief and rescue efforts under the ongoing Operation Sagar Bandhu, the field hospital set up by it in Sri Lanka's Mahiyanganaya near Kandy has provided medical care to over 2200 patients affected by Cyclone Ditwah.

The Indian medical team has successfully conducted 67 minor procedures and three operations in the field hospital since December 5, according to the statement released by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

"Operation Sagar Bandhu. Providing medial (sic) care and support. The field hospital set up by India in Mahiyanganaya near Kandy, since 5 December has already: Provided much needed medical care to more than 2200 patients affected by Cyclone Ditwah. Successfully conducted 67 minor procedures and 3 operations. Indian medical teams remain committed to delivering timely care to Sri Lankan people," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal posted on X.

India launched 'Operation Sagar Bandhu' on November 28 to provide urgent search and rescue and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) support to Sri Lanka. IANS



One can be said to be perfectly healthy in body and mind only if no part of the body or mind makes itself felt. A part makes itself felt only when there is something wrong with it. You know that you have a head only when it aches.

Sri Atmananda (1883 - 1959)

28 India Post

www.indiapost.com

December 12, 2025

AI-based diagnostic tools boosting TB, diabetes care: Govt

NEW DELHI: The government is leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) to drive transformative change in public health services, especially to tackle the burden of tuberculosis and diabetes across the country, said the Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Prataprao Jadhav.

In a written reply in the Lok Sabha, Jadhav said that the Ministry of Health has designated AIIMS Delhi, PGIMER Chandigarh, and AIIMS Rishikesh as 'Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Artificial Intelligence' to promote the development and use of AI-based solutions in Health.

"The Ministry has developed AI solutions, including the Clinical Decision Support System (CDSS) in e-Sanjeevani, a Diabetic Retinopathy (DR identification solution), and the Abnormal Chest X-ray Classifier Model,



among others," he added.

MadhuNetrAI (DR identification solution) is an AI solution developed to enable non-specialist health workers to conduct screenings for Diabetic Retinopathy. It automates DR detection by analyzing retinal fundus images using artificial intelligence, ensuring standardized,

accessible, and efficient triage.

It classifies DR across standard grades, enabling optimized resource allocation by prioritizing urgent cases for specialist referral.

"The solution has been implemented across 38 facilities in 11 states and provided AI assistance during screening of

more than 14,000 retinal images, benefiting 7,100 patients," Jadhav said.

Under the Tuberculosis elimination program, 'Cough against TB' (CATB) AI solution is used for screening for pulmonary TB in the community settings. In the deployed geographies, the solution has shown an additional yield of 12-16 percent in TB reported, over patient screenings using conventional methods.

"Between March 2023 and November 30, 2025, the CATB solution has been utilized to screen more than 1.62 lakh individuals," the Minister said.

The 'Clinical Decision Support System' (CDSS) AI solution has been integrated into the national telemedicine platform, eSanjeevani, to enhance consultation quality by streamlining patient complaints entry and providing AI-based differential diagnosis recommendations.

"Since CDSS integration in April 2023 till November 2025, 282 million eSanjeevani consultations have benefited from standardized data capture, ensuring consistency across health and wellness centers," Jadhav said.

Strict adherence to applicable standards and government policies, including AI Governance Guidelines by MeitY, Ethical Guidelines for Application of AI in Biomedical Research and Healthcare by ICMR, Information Technology Act 2000, Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023, and Rules framed thereunder, and Information Security Policy for Healthcare by the Department of Health and Family Welfare, are ensuring high operational reliability, the MoS said. IANS

India needs more skilled surgeons for revision knee, hip replacement surgeries, say experts

NEW DELHI: With a rise in the ageing population in India and failing artificial joints, the demand for skilled surgeons for revision knee and hip surgeries is rising in the country, said experts.

Revision knee or hip replacement surgery, called Revision Arthroplasty, is done when any hip or knee replacement loosens, wears out, or fails.

The artificial knee and hip joints are increasingly being subject to wear and tear, with their lifespan reduced to 20 to 25 years.

"In India, a lot of elderly patients have undergone joint re-



placement, primarily due to a rise in degenerative arthritis, in the last 15-20 years. So, the burden of revision surgeries is going to increase, as the implants can wear off or any infection might

occur, or some complication occurs," Prof Vijay Kumar, Department of Orthopedics, from AIIMS, told IANS.

"With the number of ageing implants rising rapidly in India,

the lack of specialized training can lead to premature failures, repeated operations, higher healthcare expenses, and long-term functional challenges for patients," added Dr Samarth Mittal, Additional Professor, Orthopedics, JPNA Trauma Centre, AIIMS, Delhi.

The health experts, speaking on the sidelines of the three-day Revision Arthroplasty Conference (RAC) 2025, noted that revision surgeries are far more complex and a surgically demanding procedure than the primary implant surgery and require additional surgical skills. IANS

India now a global success story, with milestones in science, healthcare, space: Jitendra Singh

NEW DELHI: India is now a global success story with milestones in all sectors such as science, innovation, healthcare, and space, said Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of Science and Technology.

Speaking at the recent India International Science Festival (IISF) 2025 in Panchkula, Haryana, Singh shared how the outlook towards India has changed globally in the last decade.

"The world has now acknowledged that India's esteem has risen; there is now huge recognition of Indian talent. There is also a remarkable change in how the world views India and the country's youth," Singh said.

"India is now a global success story with persistent milestones," he added, citing the feats achieved in the fields of science, innovation, healthcare, and space.

The Minister stated that the country has "started living up to the global parameters and is being recognized on global benchmarks".

"We were in the Fragile 5 economy in 2014, but are now among the top four globally. From just 350-400 startups, we

have scaled up 1.75 lakh across the country. We are now ranked third globally in terms of startups. In the

Global Innovation Index (GII), we were ranked 80, but within a decade, we are in the 38th spot," the Minister said.

He also mentioned that more than 55 percent of patent applications in India are now filed by resident Indian innovators, a significant increase from previous years.

"The world has now acknowledged that India's esteem has risen; there is now huge recognition of Indian talent.

There is also a remarkable change in how the world views India and the country's youth," Singh said

"While US' Neil Armstrong made the first landing on the Moon, ISRO's Chandrayan 3 was the first to detect water on the lunar surface, raising hopes for future habitation -- a milestone for which the world is hailing us," the Minister said.

Similarly, in the biotech sector, India came out with the first DNA vaccine during the deadly Covid-19 pandemic. India

has also emerged as a global leader in preventive healthcare, with the first gene therapy in the world for hemophilia, and the first indigenous antibiotic, he noted.

The Minister credited these to policy changes in the last 10 years and increasing collaboration with the private sector.

"These wonders happened due to changes in the approach towards innovation. I believe that we must have a strong

linkage with the private sector," Singh said.

Singh highlighted the essence of IISF 2025 through the '3 Cs' -- "celebration, communication, and career". The MoS noted that "IISF has become a career-shaping platform for many youngsters -- helping them discover their hidden potential and hidden aptitudes." IANS

2,501 new confirmed mpox cases, 12 deaths reported from 44 countries in October: WHO

NEW DELHI: A total of 2,501 new confirmed cases, including 12 deaths due to mpox, were reported from 44 countries in October, said the World Health Organization (WHO).

The latest situation report for the multi-country outbreak of mpox showed that all clades of the monkeypox virus (MPXV) continue to circulate.

When mpox outbreaks are not rapidly contained, and human-to-human transmission is not interrupted, there is a risk of sustained community transmission.

"In October 2025, 44 countries, across all WHO regions, reported a total of 2,501 new confirmed mpox cases, including 12 deaths (case fatality ratio [CFR] 0.5 percent)," the WHO report said.

Twenty-one countries in Africa reported active transmission of mpox in the last six weeks (from October 12 to November 23), with 1,734 confirmed cases, including 10 deaths. IANS



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Udupi Palace is a South Indian vegetarian BYOB restaurant. My friend and I had dinner there shortly after I returned from south India. We were greeted warmly and the ambiance is pleasant. The menu is so enticing that we ordered too much food but it was almost as good the next day.

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Lessons from an Indian epic: Mahabharata holds a mirror to today's world

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The Mahabharata is not merely a book, it is a tradition. To call it scripture shrinks its spirit; to call it literature underestimates its sweep. It is a living reservoir of India's civilizational experience, enriched by centuries of oral memory, cultural dialogue, and philosophical reflection. Unlike many doctrinal texts that demand unquestioning belief, the Mahabharata demands something far more difficult—reflection. It probes, questions, unsettles, and exposes the contradictions and moral ambiguities that define political power and human behavior. Its genius lies in its refusal

leadership. Had we taught the epic as the civilizational chronicle it truly is, we might have raised citizens far better equipped to understand power, ethics, conflict, and the consequences of human weakness.

An Enduring Epic

To expect the Mahabharata to offer a fixed ideology is to misunderstand the epic itself. It is too vast, too layered, too comfortable with contradiction to fit into the neat compartments that political ideologies demand. What it offers instead is a pragmatic middle path, an honest recognition that power is inherently un-

low blindly, convinced that loyalty is a substitute for judgment. On the other stand those who oppose reflexively, rejecting even sensible actions simply because they come from the "other side."

The Mahabharata warns us about both kinds. Blind loyalty ruined the Kauravas; it turned intelligent men into silent spectators. At the same time, rigid opposition wounded the Pandavas themselves, for even their vows, taken without thought for consequences, sometimes became shackles. A nation that embraces either extreme endangers itself, because in both cases the mind stops working long before the mouth stops talking.

Envy: The Oldest Poison

What fuels these dangerous tendencies? Often, the oldest poison of all, envy. "Why not me?" is a question as old as humanity. It tormented Duryodhana, surfaces repeatedly in our historical chronicles, and shakes the foundations of modern politics. Envy breeds resentment, resentment hardens into hatred, and hatred eventually turns into malice; the slow, corrosive kind that accumulates like venom in a serpent's tooth. The tragedy is that the venom harms not only the intended target but ultimately the hand that holds it.

Global Echoes: Churchill and de Gaulle

World history offers its own Mahabharata-like warnings. Winston Churchill led Britain through its darkest hour, steadied a weary nation, and defeated a monstrous tyranny. Yet as soon as victory arrived, he was voted out. Charles de Gaulle faced a similar fate in 1946, even after leading France out of humiliation and occupation.

(The author is an Indian Army veteran and a contemporary affairs commentator) South Asia Monitor

For detailed story visit
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to offer easy answers. It does not preach; it holds a mirror.

A Neglected Civilizational Chronicle

Yet, in post-Independence India, we grew strangely hesitant to teach this epic to our own children. In our eagerness to maintain a secular national identity, we packed the epics into the "religion" box, conveniently forgetting that for millennia they served as mirrors to society, not manuals of worship. This artificial distance created an ironic outcome: the Mahabharata appears "religious" today not because it is sectarian, but because it has been rendered unfamiliar.

Generations grew up studying political theory through Western thinkers, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, while remaining distant from India's most sophisticated text on power, duty, and

stable, that righteousness is always contested, and that the pursuit of absolute correctness often leads straight into conflict.

Seen this way, the dilemmas of Yudhishtira and the impulses of Duryodhana feel surprisingly modern. We see their echoes not only in parliaments and ministries, but in corporate boardrooms, family gatherings, and even in the tone of our online conversations. The epic endures because the human mind of today is not all that different from the human mind of 2,000 years ago. Only the scenery has changed.

Two Extremes Of Modern Politics

Today's political stage is not dominated by thoughtful citizens who read widely and ponder deeply. Instead, it is crowded by two equally dangerous extremes. On one side stand those who fol-



POWER PLAY

President Putin, facing diplomatic isolation since the Ukraine war began in 2022, was recently given a red carpet welcome by Delhi, which would have sent a strong message to Trump and the West. India is under pressure from Trump to stop buying oil from Russia. Frustrated by India's continued Russian oil imports and its BRICS participation, the Trump administration first imposed a 25% tariff on Indian goods, later doubling it to 50%.

It will be interesting to see how Modi manages to achieve the impossible, that is, to continue buying oil from Russia and get a mutually beneficial trade deal with Trump at the same time.

Russia is reeling under Western sanctions and India faces 50% tariffs from Washington. Both need alternate markets to boost their economies. Both countries see each other as big markets and there also seems to be an understanding that their economic partnership has underperformed for decades. Their current trade volume of \$68.72bn, up from \$8.1bn in 2020, has hugely relied on India's purchase of discounted Russian oil. Russia would like this to continue but when Putin said that Moscow was ready to continue "uninterrupted shipments" of fuel, it was a gentle nudge to Modi and India to not give into the White House's demands.

Agreements like the Russia-India economic cooperation program - is an agreement involves critical minerals and supply chains, including pharmaceuticals. A Russian-Indian pharmaceutical factory will be built in Russia's Kaluga region. India has been buying large volumes of Russian oil. As these purchases have been a major support for Russia's sanctioned economy. Much to the annoyance of America, Putin emphasized that Moscow is ready to ensure uninterrupted oil supplies to India.

Amid heightened trade tensions, analysts noted that Modi has adopted a firm stance in response to punitive tariffs imposed by Trump, maintaining India's strategic autonomy and protecting key economic interests. Despite the imposition of a 50% tariff on select Indian exports including jewelry, shrimp, and textiles, Modi refrained from making concessions, instead, signaling India's intent to diversify partnerships by engaging with leaders such as Putin and Xi by pursuing closer trade ties and with the European Union. The dispute initially strained bilateral relations, but the resumption of negotiations in September 2025 indicated that India's consistent approach might have influenced the course of talks, positioning it as a more assertive actor in global trade dynamics.

Trump's policy to make America strong and great, is no doubt a noble thought but his handling of world affairs especially under new tariffs, and immigration policies, seems to backfire. By imposing higher tariffs on India he has not only distanced India but made India drift closer towards Russia and China. Trump's immigration policies on Indian techies would eventually starve America's leadership role in information technology. It is not that America does not have talent but to create hi-tech talent pool requires time and efficiency in the constantly innovative tech space.

No single nation can progress without the support and cooperation of other nations. It is better to accept this sooner than later that some countries have market and others have products the market needs. It will be interesting to see the new power shifts and the play.



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The 3rd showroom of Malabar Gold & Diamonds in Canada and the 416th global showroom of the brand was officially inaugurated at Ajax, Ontario on 6th December by Ms. Nina Tangri, Associate Minister of Small Business for Ontario, in the presence of Mr. Shamlal Ahamed, MD-International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Mr. Faisal AK, Head of Manufacturing, Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Mr. Ameer CMC, Director of Finance & Admin at Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Mr. Shaji K, Chief Digital Officer at Malabar Group; Mr. Joseph Eapen, Regional Head of North America operations at Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Mr. Sharfas N.K, Head of Operations-Canada at Malabar Gold & Diamonds; other senior management team members, customers & well-wishers.

Cont'd from page 6

The key focus is in the areas of Health, Hunger Free World, Housing, Education, and Women Empowerment & Environment.

As part of the group's Hunger Free World initiative, over 115,000 meals are distributed daily across 119 locations, including 3 schools in the African country of Zambia.

In India alone, the group has established 1,531 micro learning centers, enrolling more than 61,000 underprivi-

leged children, many of whom transition into formal schooling. Additionally, Malabar Group has awarded more than 128,000 scholarships to female students, supporting their academic journey and empowering the next generation of women leaders.

The company also runs the "Grandma Home" project, providing accommodation for needy and destitute women. With several such initiatives already in place, the company's long-term goal is to ensure its global success benefits local communities wherever it operates.

ABOUT MALABAR

Malabar Gold & Diamonds was established in 1993 and is the flagship company of Malabar Group, a leading diversified Indian business conglomerate.

With an annual turnover of \$7.36 billion, the company currently ranks as the 5th largest jewelry retailer globally and today has a strong retail network of over 415 showrooms spread across 14 countries in addition to multiple offices, design centers, wholesale units, and factories spread across India, Middle East, Far East, the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia & New Zealand. The group, owned by 3,500 shareholders, has more than 27,500 professionals from over 26 countries working towards its continued success. Malabar Gold & Diamonds also features an online store www.malabargoldanddiamonds.com providing customers the opportunity to purchase their favorite jewelry at any time and on any day from the comfort of their homes.

The group also operates MGD - Lifestyle Jewelry, a retail concept offering trendy and lightweight jewelry that represents the independent and modern woman through its designs and collections.

Mojawhraty by Malabar is the latest retail concept from the brand, exclusively catering to the Arabic audience globally. Mojawhraty blends Arabic tradition with modern elegance.

ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) has been the primary commitment of the group since its inception. The key ESG focus areas of Malabar Group are Health, Housing, Hunger Free World, Education, Environment, and Women's empowerment. Integrating the principles of responsibility and sustainability into its core business, Malabar Group periodically strengthens its ESG goals to remain a socially conscious and responsible organization. The group contributes 5% of its profit to such initiatives in the same country of operation.

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Adah Sharma on her **IDEAL PARTNER** and traits she looks for

Actress Adah Sharma opened up about her preferences when it comes to matters of the heart.

In her recent post on Instagram, she revealed the kind of man she is drawn to and the qualities she considers essential in a partner. Taking to her Instagram handle, Adah shared a new video in which she responded to a fan who asked her what kind of guy she likes. The clip also featured text that read, "Ask me anything: What kind of guy you like and what quality he should have?"

In response, 'The Kerala Story' actress said that the one quality she values most is a "very small, tiny ego," emphasizing that humility is essential for her. Sharing her video, Sharma wrote, "Small and tiny hona bahut important hai."

Adah, who is an avid social media user, had earlier, shared Adah Ka Adda - Episode 1, where she spoke about how "andhera bhi zaroori hota hai" in life, blending her trademark quirk and philosophy. The actress thanked her team for their creative "jugaad" of arranging bed sheets for the shoot, giving a behind-the-scenes peek into her fun, spontaneous process.

For the caption, she wrote, Adah Ka Adda -Episode 1 Life mein andhera bhi zaroori hota hai Thank you dop @snehha__555 and @jagats38 jugaad se bedsheets leke aane ke liye #AdahKaAdda #adahsharma." (sic)

On the professional front, the 33-year-old actress is gearing up to play a Devi in an upcoming trilingual film directed by National Award-winner BM Giriraj. Sharing her excitement about the project, she said she feels grateful to be entrusted with such distinctive, powerful roles and to collaborate with accomplished filmmakers.

Speaking about the film, Adah shared, "I am very fortunate to be getting the opportunity to play such amazing roles and work with such talented filmmakers. Stories like 'The Kerala Story' or fictional ones like Reeta Sanyal, I will do my best to make it as realistic as possible. *IANS*



Ali Fazal **JOINS SHAKUN BATRA** for his next film

Actor Ali Fazal, who is currently keeping busy with "Mirzapur: The Movie" and Aamir Khan's upcoming production "Lahore 1947", is set to collaborate with Shakun Batra for his next, confirm sources.

Ali posted an Instagram story "It's a wrap". However, he did not share any details about what he was working on. As per sources close to *IANS*, the actor secretly completed a new project and that Ali is doing an unlikely collaboration with filmmaker Shakun Batra.

According to sources, Ali is rumored to be teaming up with "Gehraiyaan" director for a brand-new film centered around the world of social media. A source close to the development told *IANS*: "Ali has been quietly working on something very exciting. His recent 'It's a wrap' post has only added fuel to the news. He and Shakun Batra have collaborated on a film that dives deep into the impact of social media on modern relationships and identity."

"This will be one of the most unique projects Ali has taken up, and fans are eagerly waiting for an official confirmation," source added. *IANS*

TOP TEN HINDI FILM SONGS

- 1 Saiyaara: **Saiyaara**
- 2 Barbaad: **Saiyaara**
- 3 Pardesiya: **Param Sundari**
- 4 Qayde Se: **Metro ... In Dino**
- 5 Dhun: **Saiyaara**
- 6 Janaab-e-Aali: **WAR 2**
- 7 Deewaniyat: **Ek Deewane Ki Deewaniyat**
- 8 Tum Ho Toh: **Saiyaara**
- 9 Raanjhan: **Do Patti**
- 10 Zamaana Lage: **Metro ... In Dino**

Madhavan pens birthday wishes for 'G.D.N.' producer

Actor R Madhavan recently penned a heartfelt birthday wish for producer Vijay Moolan, whose production house is producing his eagerly awaited film 'G.D.N.', saying he had seldom met anybody who had so much trust in his abilities.

Taking to his social media timelines to post a picture of himself with his producer, Madhavan wrote, "Wish you the **HAPPIEST BIRTHDAY EVERRRR**, my dear brother.

I've always been so grateful to have you in my life, but with every passing year, your importance and influence in my life has been greater than ever. I have seldom met anybody who has so much trust in my abilities ..you see in me more than I can see in myself and forget I'm so grateful. God bless you and I pray that our closeness and adventurous journey continues forever. Love you, my man."

IANS

TAMANNAAH BHATIA IS JAYASHREE IN V. SHANTARAM BIOPIC

Bollywood actress Tamannaah Bhatia will be seen starring alongside actor Siddhant Chaturvedi in the upcoming biopic V. Shantaram and will be seen essaying the role of legend's second wife-actress Jayashree.

Jayashree is known for her work in

unforgettable movies like Dr. Kotnis ki Amar Kahani, Shakuntala, Chandra Rao More, Dahej and more.

Talking about the same, Tamannaah said, "It's a great responsibility to portray a character rooted in one of the most influential eras of our cinema. And I feel immensely honored to bring to life Jayashree, as she has been part of such legendary projects and the amount of grace she had was surreal."

She said that Shantaram built a legacy that continues to shape generations, and decoding his universe has allowed me to witness the brilliance of the man behind the legend.

Tamannaah added: "Bringing a piece of that legacy to the screen is truly a special feeling, and I am thankful for the makers of V Shantaram to see me as Jayashree."

The makers unveiled a new poster, where Tamannaah features as Jayshree draped in

a gorgeous pink Nauvari saree that highlights her effortless grace.

The picture was captioned: "Jayashree - The star of an era. The strength behind a legacy. A chapter returning to history."

The film is titled, V. Shantaram, is a historical biographical drama that honors the life, spirit and cinematic uprising sparked by one of India's most visionary storyteller. IANS



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JACQUELINE FERNANDEZ CALLS TYLA 'LITERAL GODDESS'

Actress Jacqueline Fernandez shared a striking picture with global music sensation Tyla, praising her by calling her "a literal goddess".

Jacqueline took to Instagram to share two pictures posing with Tyla. In a photograph, the Bollywood actress is seen in a vibrant, embellished crop jacket paired with black trousers, while Tyla stuns in a shimmering, high-slit draped ensemble.

"A literal goddess! @tyla," Jacqueline wrote as the caption.

Tyla is a South African singer and songwriter. Her musical style is characterized by a fusion of pop and amapiano, with many publications dubbing her "Queen of Popiano".

She gained international recognition after the release of her 2023 single "Water," which was the first song by a South African soloist to enter the US Billboard Hot 100 in 55 years and was awarded the inaugural Grammy Award for Best African Music Performance.

Tyla is the youngest African artist in history to win a Grammy Award. Her other accolades include two MTV Video Music Awards, two BET Awards. *IANS*



TARA SUTARIA CHANNELS JENNIFER LOPEZ GOWN

Actress Tara Sutaria stepped into a slice of Hollywood nostalgia as she recreated global star Jennifer Lopez's celebrated gown from the 2002 romantic comedy drama *Maid in Manhattan*.

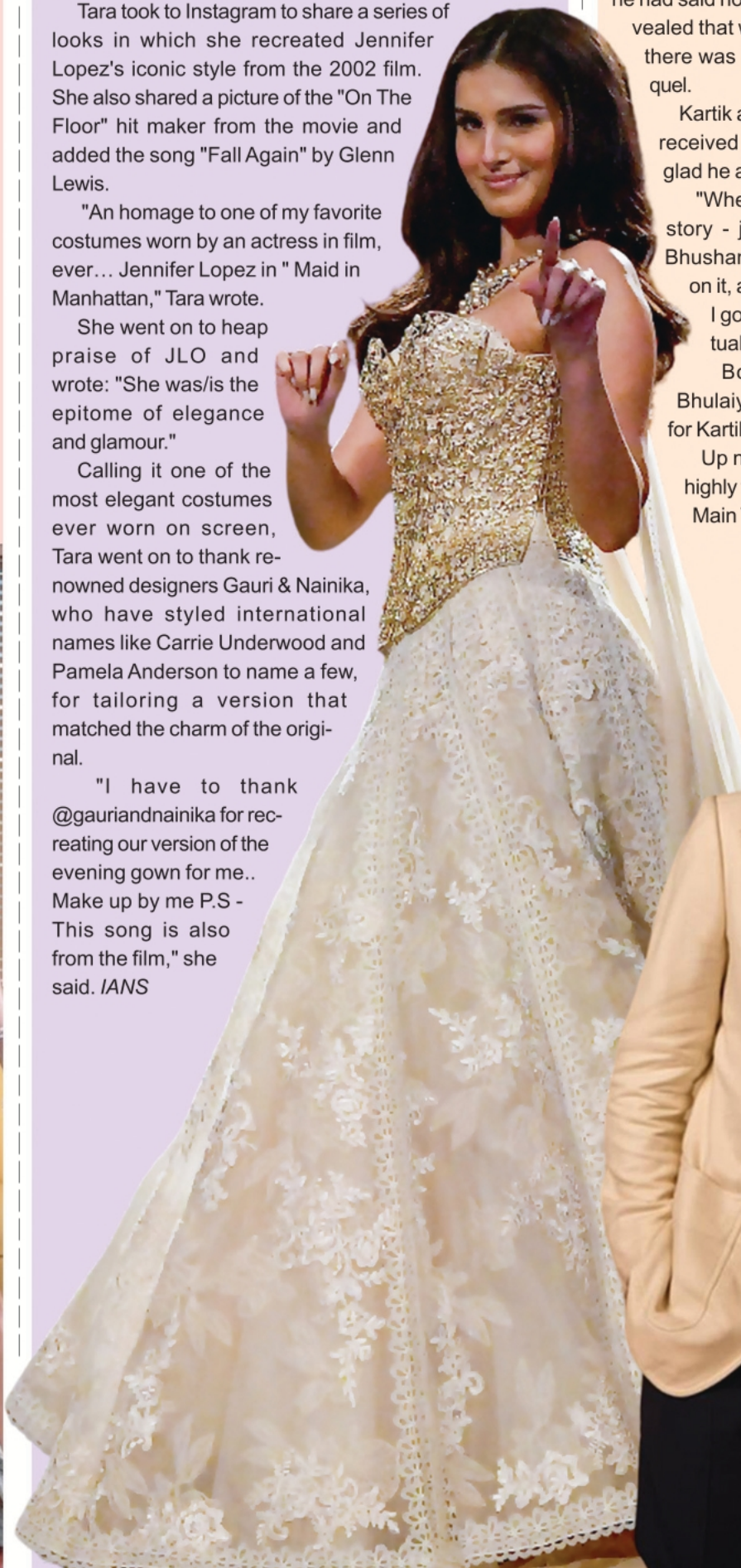
Tara took to Instagram to share a series of looks in which she recreated Jennifer Lopez's iconic style from the 2002 film. She also shared a picture of the "On The Floor" hit maker from the movie and added the song "Fall Again" by Glenn Lewis.

"An homage to one of my favorite costumes worn by an actress in film, ever... Jennifer Lopez in 'Maid in Manhattan,'" Tara wrote.

She went on to heap praise of JLO and wrote: "She was/is the epitome of elegance and glamour."

Calling it one of the most elegant costumes ever worn on screen, Tara went on to thank renowned designers Gauri & Nainika, who have styled international names like Carrie Underwood and Pamela Anderson to name a few, for tailoring a version that matched the charm of the original.

"I have to thank @gauriandnainika for recreating our version of the evening gown for me.. Make up by me P.S - This song is also from the film," she said. *IANS*



Kartik Aaryan initially said no to 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa'

Did you know, Kartik Aaryan initially said no to the 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa' franchise?

Addressing one of the sessions of the Red Sea International Film Festival in Saudi Arabia, Kartik shared that he had said no to the 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa' franchise. He revealed that when he was approached for the project, there was no particular story, just an idea for a sequel.

Kartik added that after seeing all the love he has received for his portrayal of Roohi Baba, he feels glad he agreed to become a part of the project.

"When the film first came to me, there was no story - just a sequel idea. I wasn't keen. But Bhushan (Kumar) sir convinced me, we worked on it, and everything changed. Today, wherever I go, kids call me Rooh Baba. I'm glad I eventually did it," shared Kartik.

Both "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2" and "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3," turned out to be milestone movies for Kartik.

Up next, Kartik has been roped in to lead the highly talked about romantic entertainer "Tu Meri Main Tera Main Tera Tu Meri". *IANS*



SARA ALI KHAN'S BIRTHDAY WISHES TO 'CHANDA & SURAJ OF THE FAMILY'

Sara Ali Khan wished the happiest birthday to her grandmother Sharmila Tagore, whom she referred to as the 'Chanda & Suraj of the family'. Sharing a few sneak peeks from the birthday celebration on social media, Sara wrote on her official Instagram handle, "Happiest birthday to the Chanda and Suraj of our family (Two hearts, love hands, and Full Moon Face emojis) Love you beyond words Badi Amma (Red heart emoji) (sic)."

Going by Sara's latest social media post, Sharmila Tagore's birthday celebration was attended by Sara, Saif Ali Khan, and Soha Ali Khan.

Along with a warm birthday celebration with cake and loved ones, one could also see a Christmas tree in the backdrop.

Earlier in the day, Kareena Kapoor also penned a lovely birthday wish for her mother-in-law, Sharmila Tagore, on social media.

Bebo claimed that she always strives to follow in her "amma" Sharmila Tagore's footsteps.

Kareena took to her Instagram and uploaded some family photos with the veteran actress with the caption, "Happy birthday dearest Mother in law."

The primary photo in the post had Saif smiling for the camera with mother Sharmila Tagore, who is holding little Jeh in her arms. This was followed by a still of Kareena strolling with Sharmila. The text on the image read, "Always trying to follow in your footsteps." In the last capture, Sharmila Tagore was seen playing with her grandson Jeh in a park. IANS



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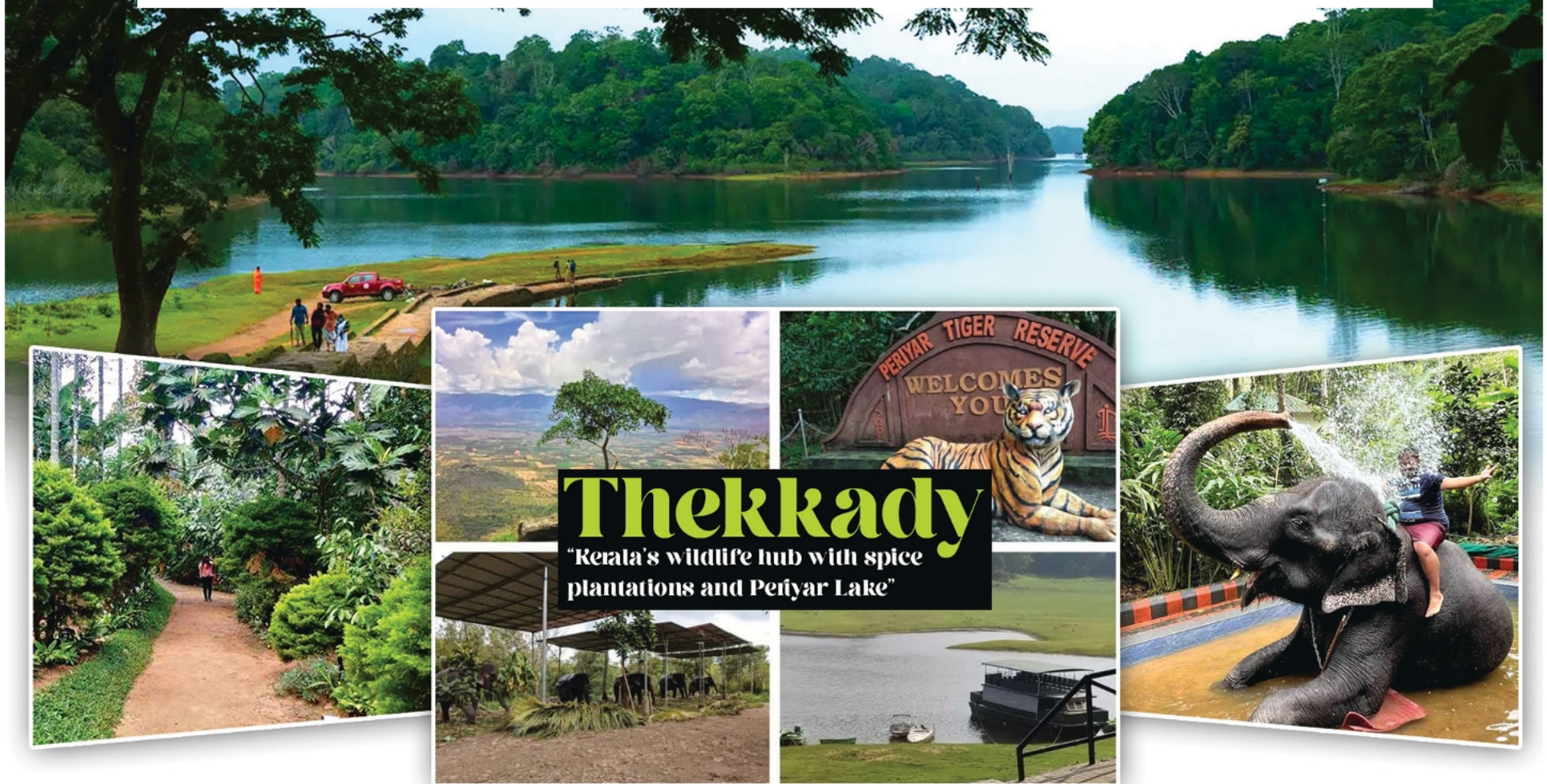
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Thekkady

"Kerala's wildlife hub with spice plantations and Periyar Lake"

Home to the country's largest Tiger Reserve-Periyar, Thekkady is an important tourist destination in Kerala. Periyar National Park, a major attraction, is where you can enjoy bamboo rafting in the catchment area of Mullaiperiyar Dam. Travelers can also experience night treks in the wilderness of Periyar. The Periyar Lake, part of the Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary, is one option for couples looking to make the most of their honeymoon in Thekkady.

Anakarra is also located nearby, a great place to enjoy nature and wander on a carpet of luxuriant vegetation. Another well-known destination to enjoy the natural beauty and expansive vistas of coffee, pepper, and cardamom plantations is Murukkady. One would be charmed by Parunthumpara hill, blessed with magnificent views. Chellar Kovil is another area located nearby with many picturesque waterfalls and cascades. Mangala Devi Temple, located at an altitude of 1337 m and at a distance of around 15km from Thekkady, opens only on the Chitra Pournami Festival.

Thekkady provides accommodations ranging from modest homestays to somewhat opulent resorts, apart from sightseeing opportunities. Many resorts are near the national park, and an early boat safari within the sanctuary is a must to spot wild elephants, bison, wild boars, various birds, etc.

Thekkady is the best place to be for anyone who wants a forest vacation and encounters wildlife. Prepare yourself for an exciting trip full of sightseeing possibilities that will take you to little streams meandering through the lush forest along the terrains, including hills, valleys, and plantations that dot this Kerala's countryside.

PLACES TO VISIT IN THEKKADY

Periyar National Park: The Periyar National Park in Thekkady, Kerala, is one of the most bio-diverse regions in the world and the best-protected reserve area that one can lay eyes on in India. Famous for its gorgeousness, greenery and stillness, the park is the dwelling place of abundant significant species, including the royal tigers and majestic elephants apart from other reptiles, fishes and birds.

Kadathanadan Kalari Centre: Kadathanadan Kalari Centre is a renowned center of the traditional form of martial arts, Kalaripayattu that was invented by Sage Parshuram. The programs arranged by the center are specifically to showcase the ancient form of self-defense in a gallery specially designed for the safety of the fighters and the audience and to give insights into the discipline required for the art form.

Periyar Tiger Trail: The Periyar Tiger Trail, located within the Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary in Thekkady, Kerala, offers a unique eco-tourism experience for adventure enthusiasts and wildlife lovers. Conducted by trained local guides and former poachers, this guided trekking program allows participants to explore the forest's biodiversity while promoting conservation.

Bamboo Rafting: Bamboo Rafting in Thekkady, conducted within the Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary, is a popular eco-tourism activity that combines adventure and nature exploration. Participants embark on a guided trek through the forest, followed by a tranquil ride on a bamboo raft across the serene waters of the Periyar Lake.

Thekkady Lake: Thekkady Lake, also known as Periyar Lake, is a picturesque artificial reservoir located within the Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary in Thekkady, Kerala. Formed by the Mullaiperiyar Dam across the Periyar River, it serves as a vital water source for the region's diverse wildlife. Visitors can enjoy serene boat rides on the lake, offering the chance to spot animals like elephants, bison, and deer along its shores. www.holidify.com



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